

# STRATFORD TIMES

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## Benefit for Bijou to be held at the Bunker Performance Lounge and Café

LISA CHESTER  
*Times Correspondent*

Many will know by now that the Bijou Restaurant suffered a devastating fire Oct. 19 resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. A collective shiver was felt among the other downtown merchants as they heard the news.

One such person is John Crawford of the Bunker Performance Lounge and Café, another Wellington Street business that specializes in live, often-local music.

“I felt concern for the staff for sure. We know some of the staff down there so of course we wanted details like what happened, was it after hours and finally, what now?” said Crawford.

What now? Those two small words together make one big question. Crawford was inspired to do a benefit concert for Bijou as his part to help in the recovery.

“I think because there is a number of places that do live music on Wellington and knowing now that there is one short; there’s several artists that I know that regularly play Bijou but I don’t think they’ve done the Bunker yet. So, I thought that would be a neat opportunity to give the artists a chance to help out their usual venue,” Crawford said.

The four artists playing the benefit are passionate about Bijou and were willing to donate their time and talent to the fundraiser. Look forward to appearances by Steph Martin, Dan Walsh, Unheard Of and Luke Robertson.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

**LEST WE FORGET**  
The parade reaches the Stratford cenotaph, which was already laden with wreaths. The cenotaph is particularly notable as it was designed by sculptor Walter S. Allward, who also designed the famous Vimy War Memorial in France. See more photos on page 3.

## Don’t have a family doctor? New clinic aims to connect locals with primary care

CONNOR LUCZKA  
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

The shortage of family doctors has been a growing problem for not only the region, but Ontario writ large. The newly opened Unattached Care Clinic (UCC) aims to tackle that problem head on.

The UCC is run by the Huron Perth and Area Ontario Health Team (HPA-OHT) through an earlier announced \$822,604 investment from the province. Robin Spence Haffner, executive director of Listowel-Wingham and

Area Family Health Team, said all eight of the family health teams came together to put together a proposal and were ultimately successful in securing the funding.

“The clinic idea came from just looking at ways we could use our existing resources and infrastructure in the family health teams, the clinics we already have, to give access to more people,” Spence Haffner said. “We’re really thrilled that we got the funding and now have the program up and going.”

There are 2.5 million Ontarians without a family doctor,

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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# Benefit for Bijou to be held at the Bunker Performance Lounge and Café

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

It is Crawford's goal to help out Bijou and let them know that Stratford is here for them. It gives the artists a chance to say thanks to Bijou for letting them play there so often and gives them the opportunity to play for the community one more time.

The performance will be a pay-what-you-can model to raise funds at the door. All of the proceeds made at the door will go to Bijou. Donations are also being accepted online from those who cannot attend. It is not a ticketed event, but people can reserve a table in advance by visiting [www.bunkerstratford.com/event-details/bijou-benefit-night](http://www.bunkerstratford.com/event-details/bijou-benefit-night).

"We are hoping for some turnover, too. That's why we are having four artists while for a Saturday it would be one, maybe two artists. For the Bijou night, we are doing

four, so we are hoping people will drop in for an hour or two, have some drinks and donate, and then free up some space for those that want to come at a later hour," Crawford said.

Crawford feels a comradery with Bijou. The businesses are similar in that they both offer opportunities for local musicians to perform for the community. While the Bijou business model is primarily as a restaurant and Crawford's is more an after-dinner performance lounge, the two don't feel competition. Rather, they both enhance the cultural backdrop for an evening out with local music.

The benefit event is Saturday, Nov. 23. Doors open at 6 p.m. and music will start at 8 p.m. The Bunker Performance Lounge and Café is located at 104 Wellington St. in Stratford.

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## Don't have a family doctor? New clinic aims to connect locals with primary care

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Spence Haffner said, and she estimates there are many thousands of people in the Huron-Perth region who don't have a doctor. To that end, the UCC is designed to provide access to acute, chronic and preventive primary care services throughout the region, including treatment for acute illnesses and management of chronic conditions, mental-health support and preventive care such as cancer screenings, vaccinations and wellness advice.

That care is done through the clinics' nurse practitioners. Although not doctors themselves, nurse practitioners are able to provide a great deal

of care that would normally be done by a family doctor.

Additionally, they are also aware of what the limitations of their scope are and are able to refer to specialists as needed.

Spence Haffner called them a "critical part" of primary care. Virginia Greene is a nurse practitioner at the Stratford UCC clinic and has been a nurse practitioner for 26 years. She said without going out looking for patients, people are already finding them – a testament to the great

need there was in the community for primary care. "The reaction's been very positive," Greene said. "People are really, really just so happy that we are here."

"We're not going to be able to attach every resident of Huron and Perth county who doesn't have a family doctor to a nurse practitioner to this program, but it's at least a step in the right direction," Spence Haffner said, clarifying that the initial investment will ensure the clinic will operate for a one-year period. "We're really looking at proving this model so that we can get increased investment."

The clinics are strategically located in Stratford, Listowel, Wingham, Goderich, Zurich and Exeter, reaching residents within a 40-kilometre radius of each site. For appointments and general inquiries, patients can call the clinic closest to them:

- Stratford Family Health Team: 226-766-0510
  - Listowel-Wingham and Area Family Health Team: 519-291-4511
  - Bluewater Area Family Health Team, Exeter Medical Clinic; Maitland Valley Medical Centre: 519-870-9034
- The UCC is not a replacement for walk-in clinics, leadership said, but a dedicated program to work in tandem with walk-ins. Appointments are required to ensure efficient care.

Spence Haffner also pointed out that in addition to the UCC, Urgent Care Ontario and Health811 are other virtual programs for those lacking a family doctor.

As always, she and the team are encouraging patients to register with Healthcare Connect to find a permanent family doctor.

# CHRISTMAS MARKET

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### NEW CLINIC

Virginia Greene is a nurse practitioner at the Stratford Unattached Care Clinic, a new program aimed to connect residents without a family doctor to primary care. She has been a nurse practitioner for 26 years and has seen firsthand how important primary care is for families.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

# Public meeting on sale of Stratford Normal School to be held

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The City of Stratford is gearing up to sell the former Stratford Normal School, but not before it holds a public meeting on the matter.

At the Nov. 12 Stratford city council meeting, council voted to initiate the process of disposing of 270 Water St., otherwise known as the Discovery Centre or Stratford Normal School, starting with a public meeting to hear from the public with respect to the building.

The Discovery Centre was purchased by the City of Stratford from the Province of Ontario and the city has owned the building since 2001. It has not been used for city operations, however, and has been leased by the Stratford Festival since

2009.

That lease expires in April of next year. Since there is no need for the building for municipal purposes, staff requested direction on declaring the property surplus and disposing of it, excluding the eastern balance of the property, which could be retained by the city for parkland.

Municipalities can dispose of their properties, in accordance with the Municipal Act, for a number of reasons such as if private ownership may better serve the interests of residents or if capital acquired can be repurposed into new or improved assets.

After the public meeting, a report on the feedback gleaned and potential options will be presented to council.

No date for the meeting has been set as of publication.

## Remembrance Day



The flags of the local Royal Canadian Legion fly as the Stratford Remembrance Day parade makes its way past city hall down to the cenotaph. Each year, the Stratford branch hosts a parade and ceremony to honour, pay tribute to and – perhaps most importantly – remember the sacrifices made by Canada’s veterans.



Students from Nancy Campbell Academy lay wreaths at the foot of the cenotaph.

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# Editorial

## Trying to understand Trump's re-election

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

With U.S. Election Day occurring a little over a week ago, I've had some time to collect my thoughts regarding the shocking result that occurred, and there's a lot to unpack within the confines of this limited space.

Heading into Election Day, my view was that Kamala Harris would defeat Donald Trump by a relatively wide margin. However, I was also concerned about Republican shenanigans impacting the result.

Despite Trump's apparent victory last week, this is not an election that he should have won.

On top of the legal and moral baggage that he has compiled over his lifetime and fears about Project 2025 and a continued assault on the rights of women and mi-

norities, Trump's re-election campaign was a dumpster fire. For those paying attention, each day brought new examples of idiocy and growing concern about his mental capacity for the world's top job. While his crowd sizes dwindled in the final days of the election as his old message grew stale, in contrast there seemed to be energetic enthusiasm on the Democratic side with packed stadiums, strong endorsements and record-breaking early voting numbers.

On the Democratic side, yes, Joe Biden should have stuck with the original plan of being a one-term, transitional president, thus allowing for an open Democratic primary to find the best candidate. Also, Kamala Harris made a mistake by running such a shielded campaign. Appearances on Fox News and Joe Rogan's podcast would have given her the chance to reach a huge segment of voters

stuck within a right-wing echo chamber. However, no campaign is perfect and these criticisms aside, Harris should have been an easy choice in this election. Even many notable Republicans, including members of Trump's former cabinet, came out strongly to endorse Harris over Trump.

Yet, she lost. In my view, two broad factors together explain the re-election of Donald Trump.

### Reason #1: Lack of critical thinking by voters.

Sadly, there is a large segment of the population that is either easily manipulated or just doesn't pay that much attention to what's going on. Given a steady diet of disinformation on Fox News or through Elon Musk's X (Twitter), it wouldn't have made a difference who the Democratic nominee was – whoever it was would have had their character poisoned by the onslaught of propaganda. Due to disinformation, millions of people were convinced that violent crime was soaring due to an open border (it isn't), inflation was out of control (it has returned to normal rates) and the economy has tanked (it hasn't).

Another aspect to consider is voter apathy and short memories. While Donald Trump is arguably more dangerous now than he was then, people were more engaged in 2020 towards removing him as president than they were in 2024 to keep him from being president. I think many people forgot just how chaotic it was four years ago. The COVID year of 2020 was also unusual in that people paid more attention to actual news than they are doing now.

### Reason #2: Aggressive tactics to suppress the vote and undermine the democratic process.

For years, Republicans have gained advantage over the Democrats by doing whatever it takes to win, even when morally questionable. There are several well-known instances of this, including

outrageous gerrymandering of electoral borders, inconsistent rulings regarding the replacement of Supreme Court justices, voting against Democratic bills even when they agree with the essence of the legislation, and ignoring the rule of law when their president was legitimately impeached.

In this election, Republicans in positions of power intentionally made it more difficult for people to vote by limiting the number of polling locations and by regularly purging eligible voter lists in left-leaning districts to suppress their vote.

Taking it a step further, Donald Trump has consistently "projected" his crimes upon others. He coined the phrase "fake news," but no one has lied more in public than himself. He made a big deal about the security of Hilary Clinton's email server, yet he kept classified documents in the Mar-a-Lago bathroom. He calls the Democrats a threat to democracy, yet Trump is the one who tried to overturn the 2020 election. Over the years, he has talked about the Democrats rigging the election, and that makes me wonder if, perhaps with the help of his favourite billionaire, they have somehow found a way to tamper with the voting tabulation machines.

It will be years, if ever, before we truly understand the impact of the varying factors that went into the unexpected re-election of Donald Trump. Hopefully we can get through a second Trump term without irreparable damage being done.

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## Letter to the Editor

### In appreciation of a gingko tree

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your story about the gingko outside the Festival Theatre that has been named Stratford's Tree of 2024 by the Stratford Tree Trust. (Oct. 16)

There are so many reasons for honouring this tree. As Tree Trust manager Marianne Van Den Heuvel notes, her group strives to bring the public's attention to the significance of trees in promoting a healthy world and the importance of preserving them to do so. Joelle Bulbrook, head gardener at the Stratford Festival, speaks of the ancient history of gingkos, which date back millions of

years.

For those looking at it, however, perhaps the immediate response to this gingko is awe at its magnificence; it is a beautiful tree. One can easily see why this species has been accorded a place in Chinese and Japanese monasteries for millennia and is regarded as holy; its golden glory inspires reverence.

It is reassuring to know that "our" gingko has been recognized as a Stratford notable. May it live long and continue to uplift all who see it!

Sincerely,  
Julia Schneider, Stratford

# STRATFORDTIMES

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# Crime Prevention Week raises awareness and builds connections

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

According to Const. Darren Fischer, community resource and media relations officer with the Stratford Police Service (SPS), the annual Crime Prevention Week in Stratford and abroad is about raising awareness and building community connections.

"I think it's just important that we continue to work with community partners and with the community in general to improve our relationship with everybody," Fischer told the Times. "Because it takes everybody working together to create a safe community."

The week is a national initiative that happens every year through the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and its provincial equivalents. This year's theme in Ontario is "Awareness in Action: Keeping Ontario Safe Together."

To that end, a plethora of events across the SPS jurisdiction took place. Kicking off the week was a car seat clinic at the St. Marys Fire Hall on Nov. 3. Then, on Nov. 5, the SPS hosted a bike registry at Stratford District Secondary School using Project 529.

The latter was one example of the



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

## AWARENESS IN ACTION

Const. Darren Fischer, community resource and media relations officer with the Stratford Police Service (SPS), poses outside of Stratford District Secondary School when the service came to host a bike registry for crime prevention week on Nov. 5.

week's importance.

During the school's lunch hour, Fischer and Const. Aaron Mounfield, along with volunteers from the school, gave

information on the Project 529 resource, which is a registry app that makes identifying and returning stolen bicycles much easier.

With free hot dogs grilled by the Optimist Club, Fischer and Mounfield registered a few bikes and showed how students can register online.

"It's really important to highlight the partnership that we have with the school board and with schools in the City of Stratford," Fischer said. "We truly do see the value of having police officers present in the schools, interacting with youth and helping guide them through all of the many different issues that are occurring in today's world."

Additionally, on Nov. 6 and 7 "Coffee With a Cop" events were held in St. Marys and Stratford, as well as an open house at 45 Buckingham Dr. in Stratford.

The week culminated with an appearance at the Stratford Warriors game in the William Allman Arena, where Fischer had an information booth and dropped the ceremonial puck to open the game.

"We would like to thank everyone for their participation at all our events throughout the week," a final post on the SPS' Facebook page reads. "The police are the public and the public are the police. Without such great community members this community wouldn't be the amazing place it is!"

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# SDSS history students honour local veteran graves ahead of Remembrance Day

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The First World War and Second World War might have been fought in Europe, but it had very real consequences for Stratfordians of the time as local history students learned ahead of this year's Remembrance Day.

On Nov. 8, Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS)'s Stephen Fischer brought one of his history classes to the veteran graves at Avondale Cemetery to give students a tangible perspective and to show respect to the city's veterans.

"We teach history," Fischer said. "This is part of the curriculum and I thought ... let's walk over there. It's a way to make things a little more real, a little more concrete."

"That's hard for a 15-year-old to relate to Europe. All these people buried here, they were there and these are the lucky ones who came back. ... There's a real connection and, right here in our community, these are local people who participated."

Dakota Toudel, one of the students who participated in the short field trip, told the Times she appreciated coming to the cemetery and showing their respects. Before they began, Fischer explained that in the summer of 1914, war broke out in Europe with Great Britain, Canada's mother country, declaring war on the country's behalf.



## HONOURING THE HEROS

Dakota Toudel, a student in Stephen Fischer's history class at Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS), plants a Canadian flag by a veteran's tombstone at Avondale Cemetery on Nov. 8.

It was Canada, however, that determined how involved in the war it was, as Toudel demonstrated. She subsequently read a portion of the speech Robert Borden, Canada's prime minister at the time, gave at the outset of the war.

"Canada's contributions to this war in

men and in resources will be significant," Toudel read. "And I have no doubt that our people will answer the call with the same courage and determination that has always marked our character. We must be resolute in our actions, and we must be united in purpose, in this hour of peril."

After explaining Canada's involvement in both world wars and which graves were veterans', Fischer distributed small Canadian flags among his students and encouraged them to plant them in front of the tombstones, first at the First World War section and then up the hill off of the John Street entrance toward the Second World War section.

It was work usually done by the local legion, Fischer said, and that day it seemed the legion beat them to it. Many graves were already adorned with flags, though that didn't stop the students, who went to work setting them.

This was Fischer's first time bringing students and flags to the cemetery. The year prior, a class had painted rocks which were distributed among the headstones, some of which were still resting there this year.

Fischer thanked Perth-Wellington MP John Nater for his help in supplying the Canadian flags, but also his students for being so enthusiastic about the opportunity.

He was also grateful for the temperate weather, all things considered, but noted it wouldn't have made a difference.

"I told them we're going to rain or shine," Fischer laughed. "What our veterans went through; a little rain is nothing compared to the experiences that they went through ... but we've had a beautiful day."

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# TEDx comes to Stratford to tackle “wicked” problem of housing

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

What’s worse, one solution or many solutions? Alan Kasperski posited it might be the latter when he took to the stage at Lazaridis Hall in the Tom Patterson Theatre on Nov. 7.

“Complex problems have many solutions,” Kasperski told the gathered crowd. “Wicked problems have so many solutions that we need to work on. ... So, one of the things I want to leave you with is what is not a solution: doing nothing.”

Kasperski was on stage that night as the organizer of the first TEDx Stratford event.

In 1984, TED began as a conference where inspiring live speakers aimed to spark new ideas on technology, entertainment and design. Since then, the speaker series has grown to cover many other topics and has also inspired the TEDx series, which is similar in format but independently organized.

The latter has grown to be so popular that thousands are held each year across the globe, including in Stratford now.

The wicked problem Kasperski spoke about that night for Stratford’s inaugural event was one top of mind for many Canadians: housing.

Anneke Smith, founder and inaugural director of the Centre for Cities (C4C) at Windsor Law, was one of the speakers. She reiterated Kasperski’s assertion about wicked problems when she tackled in her speech one of the factors of Canada’s crisis, the housing-approvals process.

“If we’re going to fix the housing crisis that we’re in – and it’s a wicked crisis – we have to fix the housing-approvals process,” Smith said. “Yes, our housing system is broken and our cities are kind



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

## HOUSING PROBLEM

Alan Kasperski, organizer for TEDx Stratford, addresses the crowd at the first-ever speaker event in the Festival City at Lazaridis Hall in the Tom Patterson Theatre on Nov. 7.

of broken, too. That’s the bad news. The good news is that fixing one of them will go a long way to fixing the other one.”

Smith joined Michael Moffat, senior director of policy and innovation at the Smart Prosperity Institute and an assistant professor in the business, economics and public policy group at the Ivey Business School, and Paul Kalbfleisch, co-author

of The Joy Experiments: Reimagining Mid-Sized Cities as a Tool to Heal Our Divided Society.

Kasperski told the Times he had watched and enjoyed the independent speaker series for a long time before he reached out to the organizers inquiring about creating a series in Stratford.

“There were some really creative things

happening ... in this community that I thought other places could learn from or would be inspired by,” Kasperski said about why he wanted to start the series.

“Those challenges that we all have, we all face them at the same time. So why reinvent the wheel? Why not try to learn, try to be as effective, as efficient as possible.”

Once Kasperski and the organizing team, which includes Geoff Love, Dan Mathieson and Craig Thompson, acquired a one-year licence from the organizing body, the team determined that housing should be its first topic, and that moving forward all topics should be focused on Stratford and Perth County, or other smaller communities akin to Stratford and Perth County.

Kasperski and his team hope that it will be a recurring series in Stratford, though it will be up to the TEDx office to decide if the first event was in keeping with the series. Each of the three 18-minute talks will be posted on the TEDx YouTube page in the coming months.

In addition to the three talks, Ryan Erb, executive director at United Way Perth-Huron, moderated a panel featuring the speakers afterward, where audience questions were fielded by each of them.

Additionally, interested students from Stratford District Secondary School assisted and will be involved in organizing a youth TEDx event in the spring, with more details to follow.

After the speakers finished, Kasperski told the crowd his hopes for not only the future of the series but the impact it has on the city.

“Hopefully you’ve heard something that inspired you. I hope something will motivate you to get involved because it’s going to take all of us to solve wicked challenges,” Kasperski said.

# BIA’s Winter Wonderland returns to Market Square with old favourites and new features

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The much anticipated return of Winter Wonderland to Market Square is set for Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. This year there are new features along with old favourites for this family friendly event.

Returning this year are the fire pits to roast Rice Krispie treats, one located in the square and one on York Street in recognition of the bustling businesses located there. Santa will be there from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. to greet children and take their letters to Santa back to the North Pole with him. Families can take their own free photograph with Santa on Saturday and Sunday.

“Everyone has a phone; we try and do as much as we can for free and really make it a community event,” said Jamie Pritchard, general manager of the Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA).

Also returning are the strolling Victorian Carollers to bring Christmas cheer to the crowds as they spend time shopping around downtown to fill their Winter Wonderland passport with a sticker for each purchase at

participating stores. Last year there were 95 businesses participating.

So much is new this year to cater to everyone that visits downtown. Yuletide cabins and food trucks will be on site to serve up snacks and drinks to satisfy cravings. Recall that council passed the bylaw allowing Al Fresco dining all year round, so grab the drink of choice from a participating restaurant to accompany that smoked turkey leg from Feature’s BBQ and relax at a picnic table.

There is a snow-globe selfie booth complete with falling artificial snow to capture the great times had at Winter Wonderland. Children can jump on what will prove to be a new favourite ride, the Polar Express Train. It will circle city hall and can fit 18 kids at a time.

“It will go, on the Downie side, it will go on the sidewalk. We have half of Wellington closed so it will go down half of Wellington, we left the other side with the parking spots open. Market Place will be closed too, so it will go along there,” said Pritchard.

Also at Market Square, attendees will be able to buy live Christmas trees sponsored

by B and C Custom Landscaping. What a great opportunity for those that live downtown and don’t drive to pick out a tree and carry it home.

“I’ve heard over the last few years it’s been harder to find somebody locally to get Christmas trees. There used to be Christmas tree lots everywhere at one time and there’s just not now. You’re not buying from the BIA but we brought in a landscaping company to do it,” Pritchard said.

Around the corner, Grayson Mills is open for family friendly photo opportunities from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day of the festival.

“You can take pets, people, whoever you want to put in there. There is a link on our page to book a session,” said Pritchard.

The link is [www.downtownstratford.ca/whats-on/winter-wander-land-2024](http://www.downtownstratford.ca/whats-on/winter-wander-land-2024).

The deadline for submission of the Winter Wonderland Passport ballot with eight valid stickers is Dec. 23 at 5 p.m. Enter to win \$250, \$150, or \$100 in downtown dollars. Participating stores will have stickers and posters in their windows, and restaurants count! Passports can be picked up at

the Destination Stratford office and participating businesses.



(GEORGE BURKHOLDER PHOTO)

The gorgeous artwork of George Burkholder is seen on posters advertising Winter Wonderland displayed around town.



# Stratford is getting not one poet laureate but two

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Stratford will soon be getting two new ambassadors: a poet laureate and a youth poet laureate.

Stratford city council approved a three-year pilot program in partnership with Destination Stratford and the Stratford Public Library at its Nov. 12 meeting.

The roles will be instrumental in supporting Stratford's literary communities, according to a staff report presented to council. They will be honours bestowed upon the successful applicants and will work to raise the profile of the literary arts

in the region.

As part of the positions, there will be duties for each. The poet laureate will be aged 25 and older and be expected to produce three original works for specific events, make three public presentations a year at least, collaborate with the library on one program and mentor the youth poet laureate.

The youth poet laureate, aged 14-24, will have the same expectations, save that they are expected to produce and present only two works rather than three.

The positions will not be jobs per se, though the poet laureate position will have a \$2,500 honorarium and the youth

poet laureate will have a \$1,000 honorarium, funded by Destination Stratford.

A selection committee will be formed, chosen by the CEO of the library and executive director of Destination Stratford. It will include members from the library, Destination Stratford and the community services department at the city. It may also include two representatives from a local arts organization or community, a member of the diversity, equity and inclusion department, or a member of city council.

The committee will review applications and select the laureates based on experience, merit, contributions to the arts

and recognition within the community, among other criteria.

The three-year pilot will be the term for the poet laureate, whereas the youth position will only serve in the role for a one-year term.

After the pilot period runs its course, the organizing committee will evaluate the program and advocate for its continuation, change, or discontinuation.

"I think it's an excellent initiative," Coun. Larry McCabe said before council approved the program. "And we have a really talented and artistic community, so I'm sure we'll have no problem filling these positions."

## Stratford city council honours 311 community members with recognition awards

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

"I hope some of you brought pillows," Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma said on Oct. 29 to kick off this year's iteration of the annual Community Recognition Awards. "We are going to recognize 311 individuals, from athletics to clubs to music, all – regardless of their achievements – have been great ambassadors of our city."

The awards are given out every year by Stratford city council to recognize and congratulate individuals achieving outstanding accomplishments over the past year. It just so happens, as Ritsma shared with the large crowd at the Rotary Complex where it was held, that it was a record-setting year in terms of the number of awards given out.

In addition to the recipients, coaches, parents and organizers recognized by council, Ritsma thanked Lindsay Van Gestel for her work in organizing the event.

Those awarded this year, according to the city's website, are:

### Girl Guides

Canada Cord Award: Audrey Riehl, Lily Milliken.

### Beavers

North Star Award: Gus Belford, James Chartrand, Ethan Trussler, Logan Trussler.

### Swimming

Amiera Black, Silas Campbell.

### Special Olympics Stratford and Area

Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games: Five-pin Bowling – Mike Keleman, Floor Hockey – Mike Hitchcock, Curling – Jane Larkworthy (Coach), Dorie Woolrich (Coach), Tiffany Keller, Curtis Bender, Dylan Haynes, Meghan O'Donovan, Jacob Ponsford.

### Tennis – Stratford Tennis Club

54th Annual Regional Doubles Tournament: Kim Straus and Heidi Pope-Kis – Ladies "A" title, Joan Aitcheson and Stacy Smith – Ladies "B" title, Liam Benton and Mark Barton – Men's "B" Final.

### Gymnastics

Lydia Pyzowski, silver medal at Gymnastics Ontario.

### Canada Senior Games

Velma Hansford – silver in 65+ Pickleball, Janet Shivas – silver in 65+ Pickleball, Mary Dingman – silver in 80+ Low Gross Golf.

### Basketball

U13 Boys – Stratford Revolution – OBA gold championship

Head Coach Dave Faulhafer, Assistant Coach Rob Mogk, Assistant Coach Graham Heaton, Mason Douglas, Caleb Faulhafer, Ethan Faulhafer, Archie Francis, Will Heaton, Ledoux Keumoe, Jack Lichty, Blake Mogk, Brayden Peters, Dilip Singh, Brent Van nes.

### U17 Boys – Stratford Revolution – OBA gold championship

Coach Scott Brookshaw, Coach Nathan Brookshaw, Coach Julia Brookshaw, Adit Mishra, Nate Bannerman, James Aul, Hunter deBoer, James Villapando, Noel Hallman, Dylan Murray, Gurveer Singh, Declan Dumas, Liam Eddleston, Owen Carr, Josh Villapando.

### U19 Boys – Stratford Revolution – OBA silver medalists

Head Coach Joe Lewis, Assistant Coach Avery Lewis, Team Manager Jen Lewis, Kody Eisler, Andrew Leitch, Kabir Aulakh, Charlie Kuepfer, John McCormick, Will Korver, Emerson Lewis, Josh Boyd, Jake Hawkeswood, Edmund Sauder, Jacob Tuling, Lincoln Perrie.

### Fencing – Stratford Fencing Club Athletes

Blake Degroot, Spencer Orr, Ellie Davies, Quintin Vollmer, Scott Bell, Cohen Bernard, Joshua Kim, Gordon Ye.

### Stepdancing

First Place – 18 and Under 'Solo', Ontario Open Competition, Kensington Ische.

First Place – "In Step", Ontario Open Stepdance Competition, Kensington Ische, Ellie Shantz, Julie McEvoy.

First Place – Tip Tap Toes – Jr Group Stepdance, Canadian Open Contest, Sabelle Ische, Zephy Goodwin, Eden Goodwin.

### Kart Racing

Aristeides (Ari) Theodoropoulos.

### Ontario Music Festival

Gordon Scot Miller and Gordon Paul Miller, first place in Contemporary Piano, Emile Grimes, first place in Classical Brass Level 6.

### Volleyball

Tyson Cassone, represented Canada at the NORCECA Championships on Team Canada U19 Volleyball Team.

### Stratford Stingers Volleyball

18U Girls – gold in Division

Head Coach Chris Parson, Assistant Coach Jenna Lange, Emelyn Collins, Virginia Will, Eva Patterson, Breanna Van Nes, Ella De Graaf, Ellen Thorup, Ella Spicer, Aydrie Groenestege, Lauren McKay, Ella Van Bakel, Milayna Mulder, Pihu Sharma, Summer Emms.

### Slingshot Softball

Robbie Gibson, Mike Lamers, Bevan Mathieson.

### Boys Baseball

Stratford Minor Baseball Association Ontario Baseball Association Provincial Championships.

### 10U "B" Provincial Championship

Coach Jon Paola, Coach Jeff Molenhuis, Coach Scott Leyser, Coach Mark Bell, Coach Chris Smith, Bentley Cunningham, Bentley Paola, Brady Casey, Dylan Hansen, Henry Leyser, Korben Bowles, Louie Domm, Louis Molenhuis, Maddux Groenestege, Maddux Smith, Roman Bell.

### 18U "A" Provincial Championship

Coach Don Grasby, Coach Matt Berger, Coach Ryan Wagler, Andrew Leitch, Beckham McLeod, Blake Hodgson, Brett Knechtel, Brynley Vogt, Carter Koch, Colin Slattery, Grady Murphy, Hutton Patterson, Jackson Campbell, Kieran Butler, Liam McEvoy, Nick Betto, Noah McIlwain, Noah Roth, Nolan Trainor.

### 22U "B" Provincial Championship

General Manager Dave Graff, Field Manager Brian Hawley, Coach Barry Grasby, Coach John McIntosh, Coach Jeff Morris, Nathan Graff, Spencer Eidt, Jack Whitehead, Evan Heinbuch, Owen Akey, Hunter Reid, Sam Bolger, Nole Musselman, Jacob Hall, Will Murphy, Carson Habel, Trent Dearden, Connor McIntosh, Jake Heinbuch, Conor Davis, Liam Parsons, Drew Tessmer, Luke Murray, Kale Murray.

### Softball

Karlee Satchell, Qualifying for the U17 Girls Canadian Championship

### Stratford Minor Girls Softball – Stratford Flames Championships

U11 – Ontario Provincial Championship Coach Courtney Canal, Coach Matt Roberts, Coach Ross Herold, Coach Tyler Canal, Avery Canal, Avery Kelly, Pierce MacNeil, Kiyah Marshall, Mya Herold, Lenna Roberts, Aubrey Vail, Nora Frayne, Sydney Hall, Emily Ewing, Lauren Masselis.

### U13 – Eastern Canadian Championship

Coach Jenn Marshall, Coach Barb Wilhelm, Coach Carolyn Quehl, Coach Lori Hartman,

Avree Marshall, Alyssa Graham, Delia Buchholtz, Abby Herold, Alise Crawford, Ciana McLaren, Reese Flanagan, Julia Glitz, Milana Verellen, Hallee Priestap, Gracie Neumeister, Scotly Lewis.

### Soccer – Stratford Strikers, League Championships

U13 – League Championships

Coach Catherine Walsh, Coach Scott Herman, Elena Hogger, Jessica Blake, Lilly Harrigan, Janey Van Straaten, Edie Murray, Reese Campbell, Kinsley McIntosh, Grace Elliott, Bailey Fergus, Payton Herman, Madison Brisbois, Myla Burdett, Hazel Shantz-Walsh, Ava Langis, Peyton Ward, Ashley Van Straaten, Peyton Van Straaten.

### U15 – League Championships

Head Coach Lindsay Marshall, Assistant Coach Mike Janmaat, Addison De Groot, Chloe Rison, Emma Groenestege, Emma Van Nes, Eve Binns, Julia Luk, Krista McMahon, Lydia Janmaat, Maeve Moss, Maren Marshall, Meghan Jongert, Mollie Hannam, Paige Witschi, Savanna Pereira, Sophia Pereira, Sophie Smith, Sutton Olmstead.

### Stratford Junior Warriors – U10 Alliance AA Championship

Head Coach Jeff Molenhuis, Assistant Coach Kyle Casey, Assistant Coach Chris Smith, Assistant Mike Holmes, Manager Jon Paola, Trainer Dalton Smith, Roman Bell, Oliver Berg, Brady Casey, Louie Domm, Archer Ehgoetz, Lucas Holmes, Ethan Hummel, Nash Knight, Finley McKee, Louis Molenhuis, Bentley Paola, Connor Parsons, Josh Peck, Beau Smith, Maddux Smith, Cater Van Nynatten, Finley Welsh.

### Dragon Boating

Stratford Women's 2.0 – 100m Sprint – Stratford Dragon Boat Festival

Melissa Rood, Ruth Lacey, Deborah Lount, Alexandra Stephens, Chelsea Raymond, Heidi Flikkema, Heather Herman, Cathy Russell, Leah Carinci, Veronica Miller, Mary Brunk, Ann Sills, Jessica Macintosh, Rachel Chamberlain, Sue Wakelin, Heather Martin, Gabby Arkett, Claire Boles, Julia McLeod, Georgina Zaharuk, Michelle Good, Steve Herman, Don Kirkpatrick, Ken Gene, Jutta Pearson.

### Ritz Dragons – A Final & Community Cup Winner – Stratford Dragon Boat Festival

Amanda Martin, Yanick Bourassa, Jaxon Martin, Paige Holdsworth, Clara Leney, Jodi McLean, Jennifer Clements, Claire Heckman, Rhiannon Ball, Phil Phillips, Alex Boersen, Dean Heckman, Josh Forbes, Bryan Tyler, Matt Theoret, Mike Graff, Adam Boersen, Sarah Pukal, Sarah Beluzic, Melissa Theoret, Erica Sayles, Kathleen Hickson, Pati Fader, Nick Pauli, Gulam Rhotumatally.



Corporation of Perth County  
1 Huron Street  
Stratford, Ontario N5A 5S4

## Notice of Adoption of an Official Plan by the Corporation of the County of Perth

**TAKE NOTICE** that the Council of the Corporation of the County of Perth passed By-law No. 4003-2024, which is a Confirmatory By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Regular Council meeting held on October 17, 2024. At the Regular Council meeting Council passed by resolution to adopt a new Official Plan for the County of Perth under the provisions of Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990.

### PURPOSE AND EFFECT:

The 2024 County Official Plan ensures a vision for Perth County and a comprehensive strategy reflective of provincial policy updates and current community priorities and values. The 2024 County Official Plan is supportive of building community, ensuring environmental health, and informed land use decisions within the County.

The 2024 County Official Plan will replace the March 2024 Consolidation of the 1999 County Official Plan and those of its Lower-Tier municipalities, including: the January 2011 Consolidation of the 2010 Official Plan for the Listowel Ward in the Municipality of North Perth; the February 2020 Consolidation of the 2009 Official Plan for the Mitchell Ward in the Municipality of West Perth; and, the April 2015 Consolidation of the 1985 Village of Milverton Official Plan. The 2024 County Official Plan will act as an overall guidance document to ensure consistent policy implementation across the County and provide a clear planning framework that is easier to navigate.

Adoption of the 2024 County Official Plan concludes the County's municipal comprehensive review exercise which has been built upon extensive community engagement. The Plan has regard for matters of provincial interest and is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. The Council of the Corporation of the County of Perth considered oral and written comments from members of the public, which resulted in numerous iterations to the New County Official Plan text and schedules prior to its adoption.

### APPROVAL AUTHORITY

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the approval authority for the 2024 County Official Plan. The 2024 County Official Plan does not come into effect until the day after the Minister has issued a decision. Pursuant to Section 17(36.5) of the Planning Act, the Minister's decision is final as there is no appeal in respect of a decision of the approval authority where the approval authority is the Minister. Any person or public body will be entitled to receive notice of the Ministry's decision if a written request to be notified of the decision is made directly to County Staff or the Ministry at the following address:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Municipal Service Office – Western  
659 Exeter Road, 2nd Floor  
London, Ontario N6E 1L3  
Tel. (519) 873-4020  
Toll Free 1-800-265-4736

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

A copy of the 2024 County Official Plan, together with supporting studies and background information, is available at [perthcounty.ca/NewOP](http://perthcounty.ca/NewOP). A hard copy of the 2024 County Official Plan is available for review at 1 Huron Street, Stratford during normal office hours.

### DATED AT THE CITY OF STRATFORD THIS 28TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2024.

Andrea Hächler Director of Planning Tel: (519) 271-0531 ext. 412 Fax: (519) 273-5967 Email: <a href="mailto:ahachler@perthcounty.ca">ahachler@perthcounty.ca</a>	Corporation of the County of Perth County Court House 1 Huron Street Stratford, ON N5A 5S4
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# Adopt-a-Family Stratford returns for fifth year in lead-up to Christmas

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For the fifth year in a row, Stratford and area residents will have the opportunity to help a local family in need this holiday season through the Adopt-a-Family Stratford initiative.

First started in 2020 as a gift-giving program for families struggling during the pandemic, Adopt-a-Family Stratford evolved last year to provide low-income families with gift cards to local businesses donated by area residents and businesses to help them purchase groceries, gifts and other items on their holiday wish lists. The program will remain largely the same this year with one exception; both the registration process for low-income families and the process for sponsoring those families has been moved online.

"Last year, we streamlined to completely gift cards for a personal item and a grocery card (for each family) because physical gifts just required so much space for storage, and we just don't have that space because this is a program we run on our free time," organizer Ashley Jantzi said. "We also ... decided to make registration an online link so it's a little bit easier for families to register. There's no printing off the paper and filling it out and then emailing it back.

"It's a little bit more streamlined and we're finding a few little issues, but we're kind of working it out as we go along."

As part of the registration process for families, which is open until Dec. 2 and available at <https://tinyurl.com/45nffdhk>, families must submit their 2023 income-tax notice of assessment or tax forms to prove their low-income status.

"They need to be official Government of Canada tax forms. We have a threshold of what is low income based off of the government, so we base it off that. Unfortu-

nately, we have actually had to decline a few families because they make too much money," Jantzi said. "It's sad, but it does happen. That's the whole reason why we do the tax returns is because then we actually know that this family, who only made \$5,000 last year, actually needs the help versus a family that made \$70,000 last year."

Adopt-a-Family Stratford does not accept applications to the program made by others on behalf of a family; a member of the family must register for the program themselves. The program is completely anonymous and no information is shared with those who sponsor participating families other than each family's preference for which businesses they'd like to receive gift cards for.

With both returning and new families already registered for this year's Adopt-a-Family program, Jantzi is encouraging locals who have a little extra to give this holiday season to consider sponsoring the purchase of a gift cards and grocery cards for those families. To sign up as a sponsor, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdh4y67m>.

While there is no official end date to sign up as a sponsor at the moment, updates on this year's Adopt-a-Family Stratford program will be posted to the organization's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/397697831623202/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/397697831623202/).

Those interested in either registering their family for the program or becoming a sponsor can also email [adoptfamilystratford@gmail.com](mailto:adoptfamilystratford@gmail.com) for more information.

"With the economy, everyone is feeling the pinch. ... Our program is really a to-Stratford, love-Stratford program," Jantzi said. "It's all locals, it's all (gift cards to) local businesses, it's all local families. It really is a truly community program like what you used to see 30 years ago, which you don't see anymore."



### ADOPT-A-FAMILY

(ASHLEY JANTZI PHOTO)

Pictured, Michelle Jackson, Dan Woods and Ashley Jantzi, the organizers of the annual Adopt-a-Family Stratford program, are hoping locals will give generously this holiday season in support of local families in need.

# Passport to Savings fundraiser returns for 12th year

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Though there are plenty of reasons to buy a Passport to Savings this year, be it the thousands of dollars in deals contained within or supporting the numerous local businesses offering those deals, perhaps the best reason to make that \$50 purchase is to give back to three local organizations dedicated to helping area residents in need.

Stratford House of Blessing, Simple Dreams Ministries and the Kiwanis Club of Stratford have relied on the annual Passport to Savings as a key fundraiser in support of their work for 12 years. The three organizations split the proceeds equally and they use that money to help the people they serve.

“It originated with the Stratford House of Blessing way back in the day and then the other organizations came onboard,” House of Blessing executive director Eva Hayes said. “It is a significant fundraiser for each of us. It’s very beneficial to be part of this whole process. Lots of people love to come in – they’re phoning already – looking for the passports. People are just waiting for them because they give them for Christmas gifts, so it’s really popular and it’s a really great fundraiser for all of us.”

Last year, Passport to Savings brought in nearly \$60,000 total, resulting in about \$19,000 raised for each of the three organizations.

“That’s significant,” Hayes said of the impact the fundraiser has on House of Blessing’s food bank operations and other programming. “That just helps us keep functioning really. It keeps food on people’s tables.”

“The need is rising,” added House of Blessing resource coordinator Aaron Balzer. “Every year it’s going up and up. More and more people in need are facing food



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

## IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL CHARITIES

Now in its 12th year, the annual Passport to Savings fundraiser supports the work done for those in need by Stratford House of Blessing, the Kiwanis Club of Stratford and Simple Dreams Ministries. Pictured from left are House of Blessing resource coordinator Aaron Balzer, House of Blessing executive director Eva Hayes, Kiwanis Club of Stratford representative Barb Muir and Simple Dreams Ministries cofounder Richard Kneider at the House of Blessing food bank.

insecurity and that’s across Canada, but certainly we’re seeing it here in our community. The need is rising, so the need for funds is rising and a fundraiser like this is hugely beneficial.”

Hayes said the number of households accessing the House of Blessing food bank has risen by 50 per cent over last year and by 165 per cent since 2021.

Barb Muir of the Kiwanis Club of Stratford said the money raised through Passport to Savings to help the club respond to calls for support from the community, whether it’s to help with the purchase of assistive devices, glasses, dentures or other necessities. The club also contributes to numerous projects in the community,

mainly those involving families and children.

Similarly, Richard Kneider of Simple Dreams says his organization is receiving calls not only from individuals in need of support, but also from other organizations reaching out for help supporting the people they serve.

“We deal with the Emily Murphy Centre, Optimism Place, Shelterlink and just people who are reaching out,” Kneider said. “The biggest thing we give away on a regular basis is beds. The number of people who are sleeping on the floor and the number of stories that you get, you’d just

shake your head in disbelief.”

Some of the funds raised through this program support Simple Dreams’ annual Thanksgiving Dinner Giveaway and the To Stratford With Love Christmas community dinner, two longstanding initiatives that aim to provide free holiday meals for those who might not otherwise get them.

This year, the Passport to Savings includes coupons and deals from more than 200 local businesses, not just in Stratford but throughout the surrounding area.

“The wonderful thing about the book is it doesn’t cost the merchant anything to be in the book,” Muir said. “What they do is they offer (a deal) and that ends up being their contribution to the charities.”

“They offer a discount of some sort, but the reality of it is, it’s win-win-win for everybody,” Kneider added. “For the merchant because it draws business in and for the three organizations because it helps financially for the different things each one of the organizations do. And especially, for the end user; I always have it in my back pocket. There are so many things. A lot of people get the passport because of the restaurants, but there’s so many other businesses that are involved.”

The Passports to Savings, which cost \$50 each, are expected to be ready by mid-November. They can be purchased at Jiffy Lube Stratford, the Stratford Farmers’ Market, the Stratford Home Furniture store and warehouse, Marlin Travel in Stratford, the Your Neighbourhood Credit Union in Stratford and Mitchell, the Little Falls Artisan Market in St. Marys, and at the Stratford House of Blessing either in person or online at [www.shob.org/passport-to-savings](http://www.shob.org/passport-to-savings).

## Shelf Help

EMMA BROMMER

Stratford Public Library

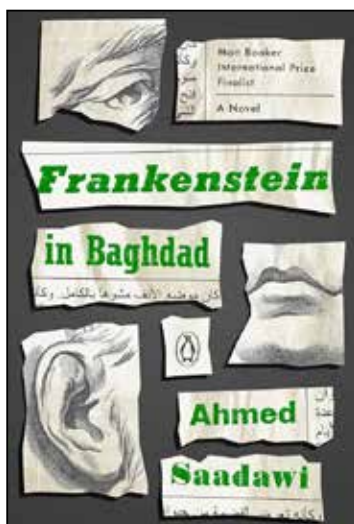
By Ahmed Saadawi; translated by Jonathan Wright

@SPL: FIC Sadaw

Sewn together by a large cast of characters, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* transports readers across the city as Iraq endures U.S. occupation and the resulting insurgent violence. In the middle of it all, Hadi the junk dealer assembles Whatsitsname, a Frankenstein-esque corpse made up of casualty body parts, with the intention of offering him a proper burial. Revived by the floating spirit of a young man, Whatsitsname is sustained by an ever-growing need for human flesh. Starting his carnage with his perceived culprits of Iraq’s unrest, the monster’s threshold

for destruction lowers and lowers, until no one in his path is spared.

Recipient of the 2014 International Prize for Arabic Fiction, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* paints a sweeping portrait of a diverse cast of Baghdadians, whose lives are all touched by Whatsitsname and the destruction of their lives, homes, and city. Ahmed Saadawi’s black humour is both mundane and magical, giving readers an omnipresent experience of the tale as his characters’ stories overlap and interact with one another. Set circa 2005 and originally published in Arabic in 2013, the 2018 English translation of Saadawi’s acclaimed novel offers a timely Arab voice for readers in the West as we witness the ongoing catastrophe of U.S. and Western Imperialism in the Middle East.



## Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

### OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

Nov. 03 Donny Achilles, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 04 Lynne Royle, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 05 Darryl Ehnes, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 06 Jackie Morden, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Nov. 07 Richard Schneidere, Gads Hill	\$50.00
Nov. 08 Narissa Connolly, St. Marys	\$50.00
Nov. 09 Marissa Groeneveld, Arthur	\$200.00
Nov. 10 Harry Schmidt, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 11 Darcy Robertson, St. Marys	\$50.00
Nov. 12 Robert Davidson, Mitchell	\$50.00
Nov. 13 Stratford Printing & Graphics, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 14 Clarence Herrick, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 15 Daniel & Kayla Klomp, Stratford	\$50.00
Nov. 16 Michelle Witzel, Shakespeare	\$200.00

### ALL OF THE CALENDARS HAVE BEEN SOLD



Franklin E. Hinz

196 Ontario Street, Stratford

519-273-1633

# Izzy the Bookworm partners with Fanfare Books to reach MS Read-A-Thon goal

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Just before her interview with the Stratford Times at Fanfare Books in Stratford on Nov. 9, eight-year-old Izzy Martchenko, also known as Izzy the Bookworm, dashed to the bookstore's children's section. She also flipped through several books during the interview.

The bookstore at 92 Ontario St. had a fundraiser where 30 per cent of proceeds from in-store purchases on Nov. 9 were donated to Izzy's MS Read-A-Thon fundraiser. Fanfare Books had several patrons browsing around the store during the event.

Izzy and her mom, Lindsey Martchenko, love to visit Fanfare and the Stratford Public Library. Izzy is participating in her fourth MS Read-A-Thon and already surpassed both her fundraising and reading goal.

On the Izzy the Bookworm Facebook page, Izzy announced that she raised \$1,100 from Fanfare Books. Her fundraising page also indicated that as of Nov. 13, she read 201 books and raised \$5,395.19.

Her favourite types of books to read right now are "Disney and chapter books."

"People always ask her favourite book, and



## READ FOR MS

Izzy and Lindsey Martchenko at FanFare Books on Nov. 9. The bookstore supported Izzy's MS Read-A-Thon with 30 per cent of proceeds from all in-store sales that day going towards the eight-year-old's fundraiser.

she always has a different answer," Lindsey Martchenko said. "She's all over the place." "It used to be A Cuddle for Little Duck," Izzy added. "Yes, that's your favourite picture book, right?" her mom responded. "That's what

you said the other day."

As someone who works in fundraising and is living with multiple sclerosis (MS), Lindsey Martchenko is touched by Izzy's passion to read as many books as possible to raise money for a cause that means a lot to the family.

"At a young age, she would say, 'Oh mommy, I need to read more, I need to read more,'" Lindsey Martchenko said. "I would say, 'Honey, you've already read so much,' and she goes, 'Yeah, but I'll raise more if I read more,' and so it's very cute, too, to watch her interpretation of what we're doing."

Lindsey Martchenko is also thankful for Fanfare Books' support for Izzy's MS Read-A-Thon.

"They are so lovely and this is so amazing that they do this to help us out and it's such a huge percentage, too," she said. "I know that a lot of businesses are hurting these days and everything's so expensive, so for a local business to donate 30 per cent is absolutely incredible and it's so greatly appreciated."

Izzy will continue her Read-A-Thon until April 30, 2025. Donations can be made online by visiting [www.msreadathon.ca/fundraisers/IzzyMartchenko5528/read-a-thon-2024](http://www.msreadathon.ca/fundraisers/IzzyMartchenko5528/read-a-thon-2024).

# Northern Lights Gift Shop reflects Kelly's love of nature, community, and faith

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

About half a decade after the Gospel Lighthouse closed, the Northern Lights Gift Shop will be providing

what some residents were missing.

Northern Lights Gift Shop opened on Nov. 7 at 51 York St. in Stratford. The shop will sell greeting cards, nature gifts, books, kids products and second-hand Christian literature, CDs and books. Owner Ann Kelly worked in Christian bookstores for about 32 years, starting with the Carpenter Shop, then the Gospel Lighthouse.

Kelly said the Christian bookstore aspect will be a part of the Northern Lights Gift Shop. After the Gospel Lighthouse closed in 2019, she would run into residents who missed the store.

"People would see me," Kelly said, "and go, 'Oh, we miss the Christian bookstore. I wish somebody would open one,' and I would go, 'Yeah, I wish somebody would open one, too.'"

Kelly was planning on leaving the retail sector and, instead, go on mission trips to Northern Ontario to support Indigenous communities in the area. She said the trips will likely happen eventually, but the opportunity to open The Northern Lights Gift Shop came to her in May 2024. Kelly added that she wanted to provide bibles for those who are looking for them.

"Buying a bible is something really important to people who want to read it," she said. "They want to see inside. They want to hold it."

The Northern Lights Gift Shop will also have a lounge for coffee, tea and packaged snacks such as cookies, muffins, chips and chocolate bars, as well as socializing.

Kelly's love of nature and growing up in a house near the woods drove the desire to put nature-inspired gifts such as mugs, plaques, pillows and pictures into her shop. Kelly is also a wildlife painter and had her painted rocks sold at Treasures before the store closed.

"I know a lot of people just love nature," she said. "Just going for a walk restores you and gets you grounded in a crazy old world. Just get out of the city for a while and it helps your perspective and boosts your morale



## OUT OF A DREAM

Northern Lights Gift Shop is the newest shop on the iconic York Street in Stratford.

and everything."

The Northern Lights Gift Shop started as Northern Lights Outreach. Kelly had a dream about the Northern Lights and in that dream, she excitedly told people about the Northern Lights. Then she realized it was more important for her to talk about the creator of the Northern Lights.

"Part of me just wants people to know that there is a creator who loves them," Kelly said. "Everyone, and I mean everyone, is created in the image of God and he just wants them to know him and have a relationship with them."

"That's my heart. I don't push anything on anybody, but I can let them know what I believe in and that it changed my life for the better and the Bible is a good book. I pick it up and read it just for the fun of it and I challenge people to just open it anywhere. Ask God 'what do you want me to read today?'"

Kelly said the Northern Lights Gift Shop might have a special Friday shopping event before December.

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# From student to director of education: Karen Tigani appointed HPCDSB director of education

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Having spent nearly her entire life as either a student of or staff member for the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board (HPCDSB), current superintendent of education Karen Tigani will soon be promoted to fill the shoes of director of education Chris Roehrig once he retires at the end of February.

Following an announcement earlier this year that Roehrig would retire from his position as of Feb. 24, 2025, the school board announced last week Tigani would be promoted to fill that role.

"I am pleased to announce the appointment of Karen Tigani as the new director of education for the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board," chair of the HPCDSB board of trustees Mary Helen Van Loon said in a press release.

"Karen brings to this role an incredible wealth of knowledge, experience and commitment to faith-based education having served in various leadership roles within our school system over the past 25 years. She is an extremely vibrant, competent, faith-filled leader who will champion the goals of our 2024-2027 strategic plan, On Fire with the Spirit. Her joyful witness to her faith and her steadfast commitment to student success and wellbeing will serve both as guide and vision for our system."

Tigani is an accomplished educator who taught English and drama at the secondary



(HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD PHOTO)

**Current Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board superintendent of education Karen Tigani will take on the role of director of education after current director Chris Roehrig retires on Feb. 24, 2025.**

level, served as a student-success teacher, vice principal, system-learning coordinator, principal and superintendent. She was a principal at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton and St. James Catholic Elementary School in Seaforth, and vice principal at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford.

As superintendent of education, Tigani currently holds portfolios related to school

supervision, faith, French immersion, early years, K-12 literacy, mathematics, multilingual learning, student success, skilled trades, pathways and leadership development among others.

"I feel a really strong sense of vocation and commitment to the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board," Tigani said. "I literally started my journey with the board as a kindergarten student and I went through elementary and secondary schools here. When I became a teacher, I started working in our board and I've just kind of worked my way throughout my career in a variety of roles, and I just feel that my life and my work has prepared me for this time and place."

"When the job was posted, I really thought about it a lot and reflected and prayed, and I just felt this is the right, next move for me and for the board."

As a result of her time serving the school board, Tigani says she has built important relationships throughout the board and in local school and parish communities, something she looks forward to prioritizing and continuing to build as director of education.

Looking ahead, she says one of the biggest challenges in her new role is to ensure the board continues to retain and attract staff that are committed to creating the best-possible learning environment for students.

"We are staffed very well and we are very proud of the quality of people who

work for our team, but we know we need to continue to stay on top of that, so I think that's something that will be a really important priority for me; supporting the people that we have, attracting excellent people to come in behind and looking at ways to ensure that we are very, very well-staffed now and into the future," Tigani said. "Obviously, I will be looking forward to hiring an outstanding superintendent of education. That will be important as I make that transition and support the entire senior-leadership team that we have here."

Speaking to that transition, Tigani said she is already working with Roehrig on learning the in and outs of the job and she expects, by the time he retires, she will be ready to hit the ground running.

"I really hope that in my leadership I can model and inspire a spirit of leadership among everyone," Tigani said. "I really believe that we all are leaders wherever we are, and that's for students and for staff. All of us are leaders and if we adopt a growth mindset, there's nothing that we can't do together."

Tigani is a graduate of St. Jerome's at the University of Waterloo and earned her Bachelor of Education at Western University and her Masters in Educational Leadership at Niagara University. She is an active member of her parish in Stratford and is engaged in leadership with many organizations in the community and provincially.

## November is Radon Awareness Month

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

It's the time of the year when shutters are closed and the heat gets turned on. As we start to spend more time inside, it can be especially important to check one's basement for high levels of radon.

Radon comes from the mineral Uranium. Uranium naturally occurs in the soil and, as it breaks down, it releases radon.

"The concern with radon is that it is an odourless, colourless, tasteless, radioactive gas that comes from the ground," said Dale Lyttle, a public-health inspector with Huron-Perth Public Health. "It's naturally found in soil, rock and water. It's found basically in every home but it's not always at elevated levels. So, radon levels inside homes can build up to levels that Health Canada considers to be dangerous. Health Canada recommends that any home with a radon level with 200 becquerels per cubic metre should take action to lower the level of radon."

A study done in between 2009 and 2013 showed that 12 per cent of the homes in Huron-Perth had radon levels of over 200 becquerels per cubic metre. This time of year, basements are at a higher risk for concerning radon levels as they tend to be well sealed during winter. Anyone spending a lot of time in their basement should be testing for radon levels.

"Over time, exposure to elevated levels of radon can actually cause lung cancer," Lyttle said. "Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers, causing over 3,000 Canadian deaths per year. Those who smoke cigarettes are at an even higher risk of developing lung cancer from radon exposure."

"If people are concerned about radon in their home,

there are test kits available. You can get them at hardware stores or you can go on websites to have them delivered to your home. Health Canada recommends to test your home every two years because testing is really the only way to know if radon levels are a concern in your house."

One of the important things, Lyttle said, is to choose a test kit that's approved by Health Canada. The best type of kit is called a long-term radon test kit, which sits in the home for at least 91 days or more to get a proper reading. Anyone who is curious about their home's radon levels can use a quick test and then follow up with a long-term test.

Radon testing is easy and effective. The kits are very easy to use with simple instructions. After placing the test in a room for 91 days or more, the test gets returned to the lab and analyzed. If the results show dangerous levels of radon, there are procedures that can lower the levels of radon in the room.

The first is active soil depressurization, which sucks the air from beneath the ground and removes the gas from the home. This procedure can range from \$3,000 to \$11,000 in cost. Another other option is to increase the ventilation in the room. Having a window open can let the radon gas escape and lower the levels of radon in the room. Changes to the HVAC system can also make a difference.

"(This month) gives us an opportunity to remind people that radon can be found anywhere in Ontario," said Lyttle. "There is a risk that levels might be high in their home and they may not even know about it. So, being aware that it could be there; it also gives us an opportunity, with winter coming, to discuss testing and how easy it is for people to test and to correct the problem if necessary for the good of their health and their family's health."

**SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.**

## Weekend Quiz

- 1) In what country did the game "Baccarat" originate?
- 2) How many valves does a trumpet have?
- 3) Snails, clams and octopi fall under what category of animal?
- 4) What year was the United Nations established?
- 5) What instrument measures air pressure?
- 6) In "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" what is Charlie's last name?
- 7) Who was the famous nurse during the Crimean War?
- 8) The National Gallery is on which London Square?
- 9) When did Toto release "Africa"?
- 10) What shape is in the middle of the Somalian flag?

This week's answers are found on pg. 38

# Our Buildings Tell a Story: The Stratford gaol and the grim reaper

PAUL WILKER AND GORD CONROY

Times Contributors

When Perth County separated from the Huron District in 1853, one of the conditions was that it build a land registry office, courthouse and gaol in Stratford, the county seat. The first courthouse and gaol (jail) were on Elizabeth Street, at Hamilton Street, with the courthouse facing William Street. Within several years, it was obvious the jail was not adequate; it was too small and poorly ventilated. After years of debate, the decision was made to build anew. The preferred site for the first jail in the newly created City of Stratford was at 30 St. Andrew St. It was built in 1886 and is still serving.

It was designed by London architect George F. Durand, who was also the architect for the courthouse, Gallery Stratford and the city's first general hospital. Both the courthouse and the jail were designed in the Queen Anne Revival Style. Features of that style include the use of different textures and colours, different-sized windows, features borrowed from other styles, and the use of decorative chimneys that were not always functional.

Hugh Nichol, nicknamed "The Grim Reaper," was the city's head jailer (or warden or governor or gaoler) for many years. In his highland kilt, he was a very imposing and well-known figure in Stratford outside of his life as the jailer.

Twice married, he had at least one child with his first wife, Mary Jane McDonald, whom he



Nineteenth-century London architect George F. Durand.

married in 1868. He had at least seven children with his second wife, Mary McDermid, whom he married in 1876. He moved with his family to reside in the jail when the new facility was built on St. Andrew Street, and worked there until he died in 1921, at age 79.

In his early days, he served during the Fenian Raids in 1866 and was a lieutenant in the Perth Regiment. He also had a passion as an amateur archaeologist and collector of native artifacts, collecting from all over the continent at the turn of the century. The Nichol collection at the Stratford Perth Museum includes milestones, tools, pipes, needles, scrapers, to-kens and fossils.

There have been three hangings at the St. Andrew Street jail. The first followed a sen-



Jail sketch by Megan Skelton.

(STREETS OF STRATFORD PHOTOS)

sational trial of Amédée Chappelle in 1895. He was convicted of murdering 14-year-old Jessie Keith in 1895 and sentenced to death. The second was Frank Roughmond who was convicted of the rape of a farm wife, Mary Peake, and hanged in 1909. The third and last hanging was in 1954 when Reuben Norman was found guilty and sentenced to death for the murder of his former girlfriend.

In 2010, workers who were upgrading the prison foundations in the jail yard discovered the bones of two executed prisoners. In the picture, Chief Turnkey H. D. Nichol points to

the two graves in the Perth County jail yard. Amédée Chappelle is buried in the grave on Mr. Nichol's left. On Mr. Nichol's right is the grave of Frank Roughmond. About 20 feet from this grave is the spot where the scaffold was built. The remains of both were reinterred in unmarked graves in Avondale Cemetery. At the time of the Chappelle hanging, Mr. Nichol's great-uncle, Hugh Nichol, was the jail governor.

This story is taken from the Streets of Stratford. For more about our buildings and their stories see [www.streetsofstratford.ca](http://www.streetsofstratford.ca).

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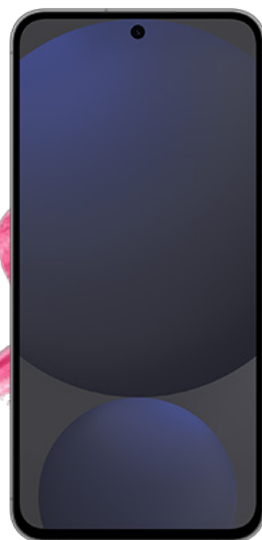
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# Greatest picks of the patch

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Correspondent

Pumpkin carving is a fall tradition that many of us participate in year after year. But what happens to the pumpkins after Halloween when they're no longer needed?

The civic beautification and environmental awareness committee (CBEAC) and Stratford's Communities In Bloom committee held the answer on Nov. 1 with the 12th annual Pumpkin Parade in Market square.

Throughout the day, locals brought in their pumpkin creations to put on display, filling Market square with wonderfully decorated pumpkins from one end to the next. Once the sun began to set, volunteers from the local air-cadet squadron set to work lighting the pumpkins, turning market square into a beautiful scene of illuminated jack-o-lanterns that everyone could enjoy.

"We moved to Market Square in 2017 and before that we were on Veterans Drive



(SYDNEY GOODWIN PHOTO)

Stratford's civic beautification and environmental awareness and Communities In Bloom committees hosted the city's 12th annual Pumpkin Parade in Market Square.

by the bandshell, but we decided to move here because it's easier to see and there's no need for road closures," said CBEAC

member Barb Hacking.

This festive tradition began in 2012, when the members of CBEAC began

talking about wanting to put together a fun, fall-themed event for after Halloween, but before the Christmas craze began.

"We began looking around at what other communities are doing around this time and we found this one great event where people bring their pumpkins down the day after Halloween so everyone can see them," said Communities In Bloom committee chair Brad Beatty, who helped organize this event.

Of course, there's more to this tradition than just displaying the beautifully carved pumpkins; they also go to good use. Once the night winds down, the organizers and volunteers load the pumpkins onto a large dig-it unlimited truck and send them to a local farm just outside of Stratford where the pumpkins become a tasty treat for the farms pigs.

For more information about CBEAC, email [cbeacstratford@yahoo.ca](mailto:cbeacstratford@yahoo.ca) or call 519-276-0393. To stay up to date on what the committee is doing, check out Stratford Civic Beautification and Environmental Awareness Committee on Facebook.



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# Basketeers program to support women at risk in Stratford and area

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A laundry basket full of household and personal-care items can help women transitioning from shelter to their new home.

The Stratford and Perth County Basketeers is in its first year running. For 24 years, Basketeers' several chapters across Canada support women fleeing domestic violence and ready to start a new chapter with their children.

"We took over leadership of the Stratford and Perth County chapter of the program so we could give back to our community by helping to support at-risk women seeking their fresh start," said Alyssa Corcoran and Cathy Corcoran, co-chairs of Stratford and Perth County Basketeers.

The basketeers fill laundry baskets full of items such as bedsheets, cutlery, soap, lotion and kitchen-cleaning products. The baskets are then dropped off at the Emily Murphy Centre and Optimism Place.

"We couldn't imagine having to make the difficult decision to flee your home and your beloved possessions with only the clothes on your back for the safety of yourself and your children," Alyssa and Cathy Corcoran said. "That is the reality that many of the women who are supported by the Emily Murphy House and Optimism Place face,

"When women are ready to transition out of the shelter and into their own space, the baskets filled with personal care and household items are presented as a transitioning gift of hope and empowerment as they walk into the next chapter of their life."

So far, Alyssa and Cathy Corcoran have been impressed by the generosity of Perth County.

"Across Perth County," they said, "we have received basket registrations from businesses who are eagerly working with their team to curate baskets, walking and reading groups who are coming together to uplift women in the community and many individual donations as well."

The Stratford and Perth County Basketeers will also be collecting monetary donations and gift cards for No Frills, Food Basics, Giant Tiger and Walmart. Monetary donations will be accepted until Nov. 18. As the Basketeers is not a registered charity, tax receipts cannot be issued.

Baskets and items can be dropped off at North Perth Community Hospice at 135 Main St. W. in Listowel, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 23 and Avondale United Church at 194 Avondale Ave. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Nov. 30.

More information can be found online by visiting [basketeers.org/chapter/stratford-perth-county](http://basketeers.org/chapter/stratford-perth-county) and [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

# Conestoga College brings ECE, other programs to Stratford campus

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The expansion of programming available at Conestoga College's Stratford campus will address the shortfall of registered early childhood educators (RECE) by 2026.

Conestoga College will offer several more programs at its Stratford campus, including the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program starting in the fall of 2025. Carolyn Finlayson, chair of child and education development studies at Conestoga College, said there is a cohort of ECE students working for the City of Stratford. The partnership revealed the demand for ECE's in Ontario also applies to Stratford.

Currently, the Province of Ontario is expecting a shortfall of 8,500 ECEs by 2026. The City of Stratford needs about 40-50 RECEs annually to offer full-time support, and the estimate doubles when all of Perth County is considered. The expansion targets of opening upwards of 800 more child-care centres in Perth County within the next five years means about 150 RECEs in the coming years will be required.

The ECE program at the Stratford campus will be offered as a two-year diploma, apprenticeship and part-time through continuing education.

"Lots of flexible options for studying ECE," said Finlayson, "And then pathways into ECE diploma through upgrading opportunities, we think, is going to be really great to support the labour-market needs in the early learning sector in the City of Stratford and adjacent communities."

Tanya Kell, dean of the School of Community Services, Access and Continuing

Education at Conestoga, said affordable child care is essential for all families with parents working in all types of jobs.

"It enables people to participate in the workforce," she said. "Therefore, it really supports all industries. Without essential childcare, that really impacts all of the economy in the province. So, it's really critical that we have more ECEs going in to fill those gaps."

In addition to the ECE program, Conestoga College will bring the following programs to the Stratford campus:

- Media Foundations
- Personal Support Worker (PSW)
- Office Administration – General
- Event Management
- Health Office Administration
- Payroll and Bookkeeping
- Academic Upgrading
- Business – Marketing
- Dual credit for high school students

The Stratford campus will be moving to a new building on Erie Street, which allows for the program expansion not previously possible due to lack of classroom space and adequate parking at 130 Youngs St. Kell said there were many requests over the years to expand the Stratford campus' programming.

"This was an opportunity for us to now do what we've been asked for, for many, many years in this new space, which will allow us to bring new supportive services for our students and more classrooms to be able to support the community," Kell said.

"Student support is really something that we take seriously."

More information about Conestoga College programs at all campuses can be found at [continuing-education.conestoga.on.ca/program-courses](http://continuing-education.conestoga.on.ca/program-courses).



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# Shop handmade ornaments and support a local cause at Daisies and Doilies

**JULIA PAUL**

*Times Correspondent*

Anyone looking for something special for loved ones this year while giving back to those in need should check out Daisies and Doilies' handmade ornaments, with 25 per cent of the proceeds going to Stratford House of Blessing.

The unique holiday fundraiser is entering its second year at the downtown Stratford business. Last year, the business raised more than \$300 and donated it to the Emily Murphy Centre.

"Me and my daughter actually made the ornaments this year, said Lisa Killeleagh, owner of Daisies and Doilies. "I've made more ornaments (this year) because I've been off with my accident, so I was able to really kind of tap into that creativity a little more.

"(This year), we're supporting (by) donating money back to the House of Blessing to help those in need. With the wintertime, it's important to help all those people that can use help. So, I have been making handmade tree ornaments and 25 per cent is being donated to them. My goal for this year is to get to \$500."

Daisies and Doilies has been open for just shy of two years. Located at 68 Wellington St., the business has made a quaint

name for itself.

"I think, as a business, you're part of a community and there are so many people that are in the community. I feel like there's so many hard times right now. So, doing a give back and giving back; I just feel so grateful that I have this store and that I'm able to create these beautiful things. So, I just feel like it's important to give back. You know, that act of kindness goes a long way."

Daisies and Doilies will be selling their handmade ornaments until Dec. 17. They will also be celebrating their two-year anniversary on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 with 15 per cent off the entire store. There will be a draw and some treats available as well.

"I think that it's just like a circle of love," said Killeleagh. "I feel like I'm putting my whole heart and love into my artwork, into my store, for my customers. So, when I tell them about (the donation), customers feel good because they know part of that money is going back to help somebody out. So, it's like they're able to appreciate the artwork and maybe give it to somebody else or cherish it, but knowing that a percentage of that is going to help somebody out.

"I just feel like maybe that will be contagious, and maybe more people would think, 'Maybe that's a great idea, what can I do to help out?'"



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

## GIFT FOR A CAUSE

Lisa Killeleagh, owner of Daisies and Doilies, poses in front of her handmade tree-ornament collection, with 25 per cent of the proceeds from ornament sales to be donated to Stratford House of Blessing.

# Stratford Makers Market hosting Christmas Market Nov. 22 and 23

**JULIA PAUL**

*Times Correspondent*

Mrs. Claus, the Grinch, Spiderman, oh my! So much to see at this year's Christmas Market hosted by the lovely ladies at the Stratford Makers Market.

Consisting of five ladies, the Stratford Makers Market strives hard to put on a great market each year.

"We take a lot of time to really go through the 275 applications," said Sara Clarke, co-organizer of the Stratford Makers Market. "We look at every application,

their photos, and curate a great selection of vendors."

From pottery to pastry and food to bath and body, jewellery and candles, there are over 120 craft vendors to browse and shop.

"This is our third year," said Clarke. "The reason why we moved to the Rotary (complex) is because it was the biggest (space) we could get. With 120 vendors coming, we needed the extra space. We wanted to put on a great event for the people."

Located at 353 McCarthy Rd., the Stratford Rotary Complex will be busy with the Christmas Market running Friday Nov. 22

from 4-9 p.m. and Saturday Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Saturday, come get a photo taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Try and find the Grinch running around the market. Have an animal balloon tied while browsing the array of Christmas items. Get a photo taken with Cinderella and the amazing Spiderman from 10 a.m. to 1p.m. Scott Saunders' Rollin Roaster will be serving food, as well.

"Last year, we raised \$18,000 for the Stratford Hospice," said Clarke. "(Our) goal is to raise \$10,000 for the Emily Mur-

phy Centre (this year).

"It's a great event because it allows a lot of local, small businesses to showcase their hard work, passion and creativity. It's an event that gives back to the community, supporting local businesses and local places like the Emily Murphy Centre and the Stratford Hospice."

The Christmas Market is a cash-donation event. Donations are accepted at the door and at the Photo Booth with Santa. There is an ATM on site and most vendors accept debit and credit.

See you there!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The Stratford Makers Market team consists of Sara, Brittany, Nicole, Abby and Rosalie.



The Christmas Market is a great opportunity to look for gifts for loved ones.

# In the spirit of giving, Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro matching donations from customers to the Salvation Army

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

It's that time of year when the kettle pots come out at local businesses.

The Salvation Army's Christmas Kettle Campaign is one of Canada's largest and most recognizable annual charitable events. Each year, Terry Voulkaridis, owner of Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro in Stratford, has donated to the Salvation Army to give back what they gave to him.

"I've been supporting the Salvation Army since 1972. Every year that I can and I'm in business, I am supporting them because I believe big time in the Salvation Army.

"In 1969, when I arrived in Toronto, I had \$20 in my pocket. I had plastic shoes from Greece and a jacket that



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Last year, Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro donated \$4,000 to the Salvation Army. This year, the restaurant hopes Stratford will be just as generous. Pictured from left are Maria, Athen Greek owner Terry Voulkaridis, Salvation Army Stratford and St. Marys executive director Rick Honcharsky and Pamela.

my mother had knitted from sheep. It was so cold, it was 20 or 30 below and the snow was so big, I was freezing."

Staying first in a hostel, then travelling the street-car tracks to St. John's Church where they were full, it was suggested to Voulkaridis that he go to St. Andrew's Church. Once there, Voulkaridis was sheltered and fed, and The Salvation Army came and gave him a coat, long johns, gloves, boots, hat, a scarf and eight dollars a week. With the support of the Salvation Army, Voulkaridis was able to find work and eventually go to school at George Brown College, where he took business management. With the success of his businesses, he has worked hard to pay that generosity and kindness back to the Salvation Army.

Last year, Voulkaridis reached out to the Salvation Army Stratford to have a Christmas Kettle placed in his restaurant. Taking it one step further than the average business, Voulkaridis pledged to match all of the donations in the Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro's Christmas Kettle.

"I'm so thankful that he picked us and walked in last year," said Maj. Rick Honcharsky, executive director of the Salvation Army Stratford and St. Marys.

After the campaign was over, Honcharsky called Voulkaridis to tell him the good news. The Christmas Kettle at Athens Greek had raised \$2,000.

"I was overwhelmed," said Voulkaridis. "I was shocked. I was happy and very proud. It was overwhelming the generosity of Stratford people, my customers, the best."

"Last year, with our Christmas campaign, we raised \$375,000," said Honcharsky. "That's basically our operating budget for the year in just six weeks."

Voulkaridis believes in the power of small acts of

kindness. One act of kindness that Voulkaridis himself did was back in 1992 when a group of boys couldn't pay for their meal at his previous restaurant, Country Boy. Voulkaridis was forgiving and even provided \$10 for the boys to get home safe.

"Years went by," said Voulkaridis. "Last Christmas, a gentleman came in ... and I said, 'What can I do for you?' He ordered a gyro and fries and sat down. ... He asked me to come over. He said, 'My name is Daniel. You don't remember me, but one day I was at Country Boy and you came over and I had no money. Not only you told me not to worry about it, you gave me 10 bucks.' He says, 'Right now, I am the vice president of Honda in Alliston.' He says, 'Any time you buy a Honda, you talk to me, here's my card,' and he turned around and put \$500 in the (Christmas Kettle).

"It shows you when you do something good, you never know who is going to be there for you."

This year, Voulkaridis has made the same pledge. For every dollar put in the Christmas Kettle at Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro, Voulkaridis will match it.

"I hope for the best," said Voulkaridis. "I don't want to put a number, I just hope for the best. I'm looking forward that people are going to be generous because it's a great organization. I just want to put a smile on the kids' and families' (faces)."

When asked what is special about Stratford compared to the other towns Voulkaridis has operated restaurants in, he said, "I don't want to brag about Stratford, but definitely the people are very loyal and humble and if they like you, they will support you 100 per cent.

"This has been a phenomenal operation. We're ecstatic and very, very happy with the sales we do and the response of Stratford. Stratford is good people, energetic people and, above all, if they like you, they will support you. We believe in this because we give them a great value. If you're not happy, we will cheerfully refund your money. So, we're confident. If you want to succeed in this business, you got to give the people good food, good service and a good price."

The Christmas Kettle Campaign runs from Nov. 14 to Dec. 24. Be sure to swing by Athens Greek Souvlaki & Gyro located at 804 Ontario St. for a tasty gyro and to have any donations to the campaign matched.

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# The Flour Mill to open Stratford Location

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Flour Mill hopes Stratford will get a taste of what the St. Marys culinary destination has to offer.

The business run by mother-daughter duo Tracey Pritchard and Alex O'Shea will be opening a second location at 2 Ontario St., Stratford. O'Shea told the St. Marys Independent that, at first, there were no plans to open another location.

"The owner of the property is a client of ours and approached us one day about taking over the space," O'Shea said. "We laughed at first, but a seed had been planted ... and here we are."

"My mum and I both love the location. Two Ontario Street is such the charming building and has many similar characteristics to our current location. The more we thought about it, the more we could see a Flour Mill in the space."

The Flour Mill announced the new location on Instagram on Oct. 5 to a positive response.

"We are so grateful to our clients and their enthusiasm is our greatest motivator. We look forward to serving our new community," O'Shea said.

The St. Marys Flour Mill location at



(ALEX O'SHEA PHOTO)

## SECOND LOCATION

Mother and daughter Tracey Pritchard and Alex O'Shea of the Flour Mill will be opening a second location in Stratford. The Flour Mill Outpost will offer Stratford a sample of what can be found in the St. Marys culinary destination.

6 Water St. S will operate as usual with brunches, special events, dine-in service and catering. The Stratford location, which will be known as the Flour Mill Outpost, will be a quarter of the size and

offer coffee, beverages, curated items for entertaining guests, snacks, grab-and-go and gourmet-prepared food.

"Selection and design is intended to leave clients wanting more," O'Shea said,

"and hopefully a drive to St Marys."

The Flour Mill Outpost is expected to have a pop-up opening in December just in time for the holiday season before closing in January 2025 for renovations.

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# STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

## Warriors stay near top of West while battling growing pains

SPENCER SEYMOUR

*Times Regional Reporter*

In the 12 games after the team's six straight wins to start the season, the Stratford Hunter Steel Ltd. Warriors find themselves having precisely half the points that were available to them.

Since Oct. 3, the Warriors have a 6-6-0 record, most recently including two wins and two losses to start the month of November.

The Warriors opened the month with a pair of interconference games, the first being on Nov. 1 against the Eastern Conference's Brantford Titans, who only just climbed into eighth in the East as the Welland Junior Canadians find themselves in free-fall amidst an 11-game losing

streak as of press time.

Seven different goal-scorers got on the board for the Warriors against Brantford, while Chase Furlong earned the win in goal, making 26 saves as Stratford downed the Titans 7-2. Dax Vader and Aaron Green each led the way with a goal and two assists, while Heath Bogart, Dracen Campbell and Cole Lewis all had two-point nights.

Their goal-scoring touch disappeared just 24 hours later, however, when the Warriors were stifled by Lennart Niese in Cambridge, losing 2-1 despite outshooting the Redhawks 44-16. Quinn Kipfer scored the Warriors' only goal.

According to head coach Dave Williams, the bench staff was pleased with the group's effort despite the disappointing result.

"We played a really solid game," Williams told the Times. "We maybe could have started a little bit better in the first but we were really good in the second and third periods. We just couldn't seem to find the back of the net. As a coaching staff, looking at how we played, I don't think we were too upset, but it was just one of those nights where we played well enough to win, but didn't get the result we wanted. We had our opportunities to score, but a big credit to Cambridge's goalie who played really well."

Back to facing their Western Conference rivals, the Warriors hosted the Listowel Cyclones on Nov. 8. Unfortunately for Stratford, the Cyclones got the early jump on the game, taking a 1-0 lead just 19 seconds into the contest. However, by the end of the first, the Warriors had clawed back and took a 2-1 lead into the first intermissions.

Colin Slattery and Hudson Binder scored Stratford's goals, and in doing so, ended four- and five-game goal droughts respectively.

Williams praised his squad for handling one of the most physically demanding games of their season.

"It was probably a heavier game than we're used to. Listowel forced us to play a little bit more physical than we might typically play, but I thought we did a decent enough job handling that. As a group, we've been talking about being prepared to have to play a bit more physical at times and sacrificing physically to make the right play at the right time and the majority of our guys were prepared to do that."

The two teams went end-to-end in the second frame, trading goals over a span of seven minutes and 26 seconds, resulting in a 4-3 Warriors lead going into the third. Lewis, who entered the game with just one goal in his previous five games, scored for Stratford in the second, along with Dax Vader, who enters the Warriors' next game on Nov. 15 against the Komoka Kings with points in three of his last four outings.

"There was a lot of back-and-forth play," Williams noted. "I think our guys deserve a lot of credit because every time Listowel scored and made it feel like they were crawling back and maybe about to take control, our guys were able to respond and give ourselves a bit of breathing room."

The lone goal of the third period came from Rhyse

Brown, who ended a goal slump that had lasted for the Minesing, Ont. native's previous five games heading into the clash with Listowel.

Once again, however, as the Warriors hit the road on Nov. 12, they also hit a stumbling block in the form of the rapidly rising Chatham Maroons which, as of press time, lead the GOJHL in goals with 86 and also hold the distinction of being the first team to defeat the St. Marys Lincolns this season.

Despite the Maroons outshooting Stratford 20-12 in the opening period, Chase Furlong managed to keep the Warriors in the game as it went into intermission scoreless.

Chatham's shot-clock advantage finally translated into goals when Ryan Vannettan scored the ice-breaker with just over two-and-a-half minutes left in the middle period. Brody Gillis put the Maroons ahead 2-0 midway through the third before Hunter Nagge scored to cut the lead in half, but the Warriors couldn't find the game-tying goal, losing 2-1.

Nagge's goal came after a five-game stretch in which he found the back of the net just once.

Furlong made 48 saves in the Warriors' net.

The Warriors' bench boss discussed the loss to Chatham and the group's growing pains, specifically in the offensive zone, explaining they are in the midst of transferring the good habits being developed in practice into their games on a consistent basis.

"It was another case of struggling to generate offence. Since we last played Chatham, they've made some good acquisitions and they seem to be a much-improved team. We just struggled to find ways to get to the net and generate offence. I think we've seen it a few times. Whether it was against St. Marys (on Oct. 28), or Cambridge (on Nov. 2), or in this one against Chatham, I thought we played some decent hockey but we needed to be a bit more selfish in good areas."

"We want to have a little bit more grittiness in wanting to get around the blue ice and find pucks in tough areas where goals are scored," Williams continued. "We look at our data to see where our five-on-five shots and tips coming from each game and we're getting a bit too many from outside the faceoff circles and above the dots, so we need to challenge our guys to really push even more for those chances in the tougher areas."

Despite having an up-and-down stretch since their red-hot start to the year, the Warriors remain near the top of the West, with Williams stating the team's drive to get better has allowed them stay afloat despite their inconsistent results.

"Being a bit of a younger group, I think they really embrace that mindset of coming to the rink and competing and working hard for two hours every Monday and Wednesday night. I think they're really trying to do what we're asking them to do systematically. I think they are trying to implement how we want to play every night. It's a great group to coach. They are very coachable. They're working very hard at doing what we ask of them and it's just a matter of translating what they're doing in practice into the games."

# Stratford District Secondary junior boys win Huron-Perth title

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

After going unbeaten during the regular season, the Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) Junior Boys volleyball team earned the Huron-Perth league title on Nov. 7, defeating St. Marys DCVI in the championship game three sets to one.

Coach Kerry Thompson told the Times the team's cohesive nature allowed them to go 8-0 before winning both playoff games, only losing one set all year.

"The team was committed and worked hard to improve across a number of skills," said Thompson. "We're really happy with how well we played all season and the boys' development. There is good camaraderie on the team and they play with very good sportsmanship."

Going undefeated in the regular season earned the SDSS junior boys a bye to the semi-finals, where they won three straight sets over St. Michael Catholic Secondary (St. Mike's) by scores of 25-17, 25-22 and 25-17. Coach Marcie Stears noted the familiarity between the two Stratford schools allowed them

to gameplan for their semi-final clash.

"This was our fourth time meeting St. Mike's this year, so we had a good idea what the match might look like in terms of what they would throw at us," Stears explained. "We knew we had to go out strong from the start and not let them take control of the game, and I think we did a good job at accomplishing that."

With the win, the Golden Bears qualified for the championship final against DCVI. After a 25-12 win in the first set, St. Marys handed SDSS their first lost set of the season, narrowly dropping the second 26-24. However, Stears' squad quickly bounced back and took the next two sets 25-13 and 25-17, withstanding what the coach called a consistently solid St. Marys challenge.

"We hadn't played St. Marys since the start of the season when they were missing some starters," said Thompson. "DCVI is a well-controlled, disciplined team. While they don't do anything flashy, they don't make many large errors. We did a good job mixing up the sets and keeping up the energy and momentum on the court."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## HURON-PERTH TITLE

The Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) junior Boys volleyball team won the Huron-Perth Playoff Championship in four sets over St. Marys DCVI on Nov. 7. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Jack de Graaf, Davis Longston, Brody Sinclair, Caden Ollson and Nate Meadows. In the back row, from left, are coach Kerry Thompson, Jordan Diep, Yug Patel, Rylan Lewis, Cohen Bernard, Cole Weyers, Evan Abercrombie, Evan Ehnes, Chahil Patel and coach Marcie Stears.

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# Powerhouse SDSS senior boys capture Huron-Perth banner

SPENCER SEYMOUR

*Times Regional Reporter*

The Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) Senior Boys volleyball team capped off their dominant season in the Huron-Perth league by winning the district's championship pennant on Nov. 7.

After earning a bye into the second round of the Huron-Perth playoffs on the backs of their undefeated season, SDSS ran the table in the post-season, first defeating St. Marys DCVI in the semi-final, followed by beating St. Michael Catholic Secondary School (St. Mike's) in the final, both in straight sets.

The Golden Bears defeated DCVI on Nov. 5 with straight-set results of 25-14, 25-11 and 25-9 to book their spot in the championship game. According to head coach Mark Cassone, despite the solid effort put forward by DCVI, the wealth of experience on the SDSS side won out.

"St. Marys is a very well-coached team, but I think our guys are quite a bit more experienced which I think made a big difference," Cassone told the Times. "We have an unusually strong team that can compete with the top triple-A teams, so we believed that if we did our job and lived up to the experience and talent we have, we would come out with the win."

In the final match, SDSS took three consecutive sets by scores of 25-16, 25-13 and 25-18 over St. Mike's. Cassone cred-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## UNDEFEATED SEASON

The Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) Senior Boys volleyball team maintained a perfect record en route to winning the Huron-Perth Championship. This season saw SDSS win every game without dropping a single set. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are MJ White, Harrison Robinet, Sam Binns and Owen Blain. In the back row, from left, are coach Teddy Gough, coach Mark Cassone, Caden Diehl, Josh Boyd, Tyson Cassone, Edmund Sauder, Ryan Cassone and coach Chris Parson.

ited his group's performance in the championship game, praising their high-flying start to the match as well as their focus.

"We had to play diligently. I warned

our guys ahead of time that St. Mike's has improved a lot throughout the year. They beat two teams that had previously beaten them, both in straight sets. We

talked about not taking the game lightly and playing our game, and our boys did a good job, especially early. We got off to a really strong start, which was important because it gave our guys confidence and made it harder for St. Mike's to come back."

With the straight-set wins en route to the playoff final victory, SDSS not only enjoyed a season free from losses on their record but also avoided losing any individual sets this year. The head coach explained why the squad enjoyed quite literally a blemish-free campaign.

"It's a mix of athleticism and the kids' overall ability to react in the moment to what's going on in the game," said Cassone. "This is also a very tall team, but being tall doesn't always make a team great. In our case, our kids use their height really well. Their mental game is also great. They care a lot and they always want to improve."

Cassone also expressed happiness with the growth of the younger members of the Golden Bears' roster.

"I'm really pleased with the improvement we've seen of our middles. Our players in the middle are an important piece of the puzzle, and coming into this season, they were very talented but had a bit less experience than the rest of the team. When they have, we're able to block and hit from all areas of the court. Having them improve the way they have has made us a truly complete team."

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# Award-winning UK collective NYX to close Lights On Stratford

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

In partnership with Stratford Summer Music, the final weekend of Lights On Stratford will bring the award-winning NYX: electronic drone choir with their unique music and lights to Tom Patterson Theatre on Jan. 18, 2025.

As described in a press release, NYX embodies live electronics, drone and ecstatic choral sound, testing the limits of organic and synthetic modulation to explore the entire spectrum of collective voice as an instrument. NYX are a self-managed collective that has performed at London Design Festival, London Fashion Week, Hyde Park, Pompidou Centre, Roundhouse, Rewire Festival, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Kings Place, EARTH, Barbican and Dark Mofo Festival among other festivals and venues.

With visceral compositions by Sian O’Gorman, NYX’s music responds to the human body, architecture and nature, enhanced by spatial sound design.

“It is from 7:30-8:30 (p.m.) and I think it will be really, really beautiful,” said Kaileigh Krystofiak, general manager of Lights On Stratford. “They are incredible artists that are a little bit different than what the norm would be for a Tom Patterson Theatre musical event. It is choral meets alternative meets electronic music.”

The synergy lies within Emergence, the light-art installation planned for Market Square. On Jan. 19, 2025, for the first time ever, there will be a union between NYX and the UK’s award-winning Emergence. This will be a new experience for the electronic drone choir and This Is Loop, the collaborative artistic partnership of artists Harriet Lumby and Alan Hayes based in the UK.

“When we programmed Emergence, in their pitch deck at the very end of it they talk about the soundtrack for Emergence and their collaboration with NYX and they say something like a collaborative concert

performance with NYX and Emergence was available should presenters be interested. I saw that initially and thought, ‘How cool was that?’ ” said Krystofiak.

So, she reached out to This Is Loop and they were ecstatic with the possibility of the live collaboration with NYX because, as it turned out, they had never done it before. Stratford is no stranger to world premieres and this is one not to be missed.

“The team at This Is Loop has great admiration for the work of NYX: electronic drone choir. Being able to exhibit in Stratford alongside them is the ultimate realization of our collaboration on the original score for our artwork, Emergence,” a spokesperson from This is Loop said.

Additionally, on Friday, Jan. 17 at 1:30 p.m., there will be two workshops with NYX in which participants can explore hands-on voice as an instrument. NYX is a group of eight, so between them, they will run the two concurrent workshops with the hopes of one group dedicated for youth and the other group for adults. The two-hour workshops are open to all ages and are \$25 for students and \$50 for adults.

“They will be exploring the type of music, electronics, vocal modulation and breath work. They are a group that is very about their physicality and voice and how our bodies contribute to our voice and sound. It will be very interesting for team building and also the solo-individual aspect of your body as an instrument,” said Krystofiak. “Through the work of this incredible partnership of Stratford arts organizations, the closing weekend of our fifth season of Lights On Stratford will be a truly immersive exploration of creative collaboration.”

For tickets to the workshops on Jan. 17, 2025, visit stratfordfestival.ca/NYX-Workshop. For tickets to the concert on the 18th, visit stratfordfestival.ca/NYX-Live. The closing performance on the 19th with NYX at Emergence in Market Square is free and begins at 6:30 p.m.



## ELECTRONIC DRONE CHOIR

(TYR LIANG PHOTO)

UK collective NYX: electronic drone choir will be helping close the final weekend of Lights On Stratford, which runs from Dec. 13, 2024 to Jan. 19, 2025, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday to Sunday.

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# Graham Abbey reflects on 25 years at the Stratford Festival

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Longtime Stratford Festival actor Graham Abbey recently celebrated a quarter-century's worth of work with the festival.

Abbey received a commemorative pin for being part of the Stratford Festival for 25 years. The actor said he is honoured to receive the accolade among other members of the Stratford Festival who have been involved for between 30 to 60 years.

"It's humbling. It's kind of alarming, I suppose, and I think it's exciting," Abbey said. "I'm certainly part of a really amazing group of artists and crew and others who were celebrated that evening. Lots of people put in many more years than me, but it's a testament to, I think, this town and that institution that people dedicate a

significant part of their lives to making art there."

Some of Abbey's favourite memories of performing at the Stratford Festival include taking on the role of several Shakespearean characters including Romeo, Macbeth, Petruchio and Prince Hal four times in three productions. He also said the 1997 production of *Death of a Salesman*, in which he played Biff, is a fond memory.

"I love that play and it was a great production," Abbey said. "It was thrilling to be on stage with Martha Henry and Al Waxman. I was just in awe the whole time."

Abbey grew up in Stratford and still runs into now-retired teachers who taught him in elementary school. He is raising a family of his own and coaching a girls' volleyball team, something he called a "full-circle" moment as he played volleyball in high school.

Abbey also said that many passersby in Stratford will stop to talk to him and will go to the Festival just to see him perform. He enjoys mentoring the younger actors and said he worked with many talented performers over the years including Henry, Seanna McKenna, Colm Feore, Brian Bedford and Douglas Campbell.

"It's so cliché sometimes to talk about family, but the theatre world is and always has been a close-knit family," he said. "I look at pictures of myself over the years in Stratford and I can see myself aging for sure, but I also have so many memories of amazing, amazing artists that I got to work with both on the directing side and on the acting side."

Abbey will return to the Stratford Festival in 2025 as Banquo in *Macbeth* and Leontes in *A Winter's Tale*.



Graham Abbey proudly received his commemorative pin that honours his 25 years of work at the Stratford Festival. He spoke highly of the renowned theatre festival and of his hometown, Stratford.

# Judy Maddren marks 35th anniversary producing *A Christmas Carol*

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

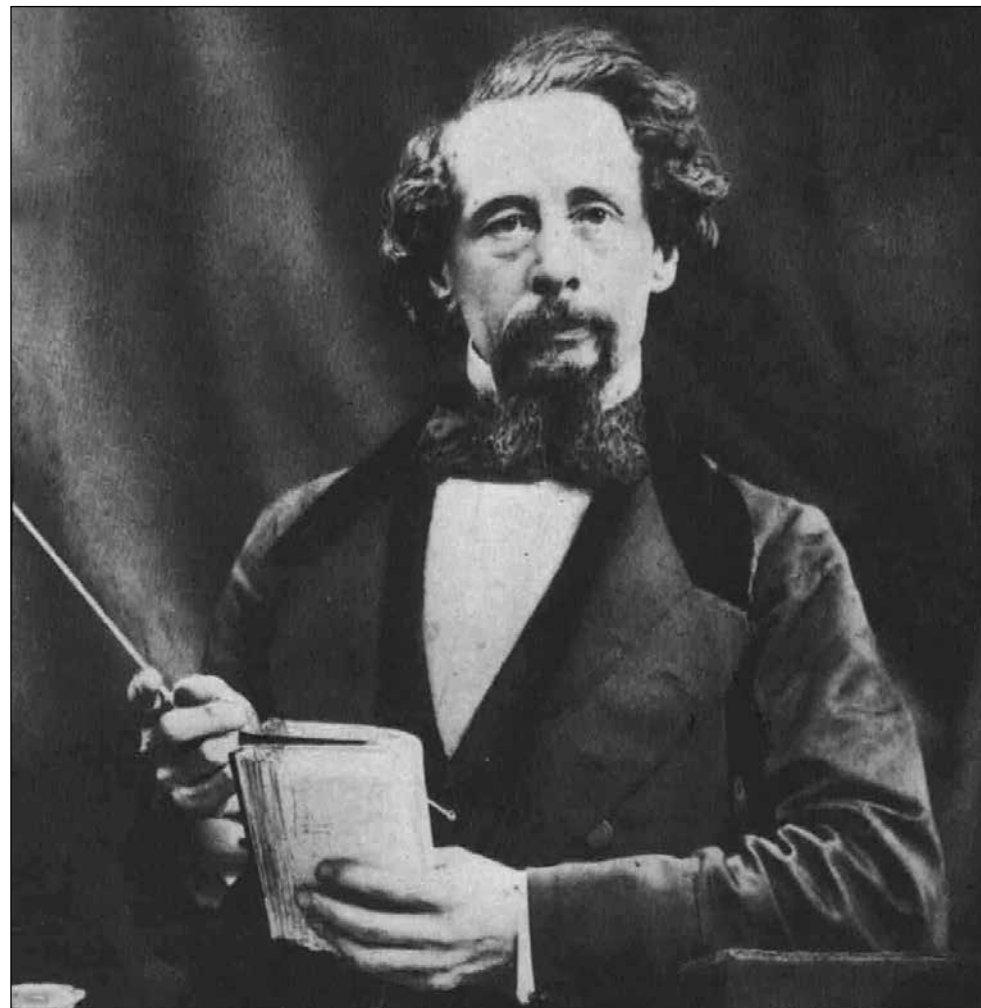
Prepare for a fabulous evening of storytelling with a dramatic reading of *A Christmas Carol* at Avondale United Church Dec. 8 at 7 p.m.

This Christmas tradition was a resounding success last year and promises to sell out again this year. Former CBC radio host Judy Maddren first produced a dramatic reading of *A Christmas Carol* 35 years ago in Toronto. It was supposed to be a one-off, fun project with friends from the CBC reading yet here she is, all these years later, welcoming another audience for an evening to exercise the imagination.

"We listen to podcasts, we listen to radio, but having someone read to us with gestures and facial expressions, you know, it's a whole different ballgame. I was reading the story to the kids because (my husband) Tim had agreed to do the dishes after supper if I looked after our four kids. He kept appearing with a tea towel on his shoulder and listening and that's when I thought, 'We all like to be read to,'" said Maddren.

This year's event will feature Peter Mansbridge as host for the evening. Assembled has been six magnificent voices for reading accompanied by Dan Stacey on fiddle with a performance by the Kinnaris Women's Chamber Choir. Cast as readers are award-winning actors Sarah Dodd and Austin Eckert, the terrific orator, Ryan Erb, Juno nominated and award-winning singer-songwriter and musician Dayna Manning, Maddren and radio personality Jamie Cottle.

"I have probably heard this story read 300 times, read out loud, and every time a reader brings out some subtlety or some new understanding of Dickens' prose which I find fascinating and I think that's why people come back year after year. There's always something new to hear or



## A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Charles Dickens' story *A Christmas Carol* will be brought to life in a dramatic reading at Avondale United Church. Pictured, Dickens himself reads to the public. He began public readings around 1853 in Birmingham, England.

enjoy. Some readers really get the humour and know how to make it clear and that's really fun," she said.

As host, Mansbridge will lead the audience through the evening with an introduction and, perhaps, he will even talk a bit about his connection. The reading is a fundraiser for Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, of which he is a huge supporter.

ers in fancy dress; people often wonder with a dramatic reading just what there is to look at. One year, there was a revolving Christmas tree on stage for some eye candy but, more often than not, the audience is so engaged in the spoken word and the images they invoke, they soon find themselves wrapped up in the story.

This adaptation is one that was shortened by Dickens himself for public readings. There really aren't any formal rehearsals where the cast gathers and practices. This is where it is imperative to gather experienced voices as readers who are committed to practicing out loud at home.

"I send them the whole script so they know where their section fits in and I tell them to have fun with it. It appeals to each reader's creativity to bring the story alive not with just the words but with their gestures and facial expressions and pausing. That's one thing I tell people, make sure you leave space for laughter because it will happen," said Maddren.

The music and lighting knit together the performances seamlessly, giving the production a sense of flow for the audience. The music sets off the script, the script sets off the next piece of music, so it all flows.

There will be an intermission where there will be hot chocolate and shortbread available courtesy of Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth volunteers. Shortbread will be available for sale and there will be a draw for a gift basket filled with treats from Albert Street merchants.

Tickets are available online at [www.rotaryhospice.ca/a-christmas-carol](http://www.rotaryhospice.ca/a-christmas-carol). They cost \$50 each and proceeds go to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. The Rotary Hospice provides a peaceful, comfortable home with 24-hour specialized, palliative care for those at end of life as well as support for those in their circle. It provides a needed alternative to institutional care facilities and home care.

"The strength of a community is shown through the way it responds to the needs of some of its residents," Mansbridge wrote in an email. "The support of the annual reading of the Christmas Carol in Stratford exhibits that commitment and I'm honoured and thrilled to be a part of it again this year."

The audience can expect to see the read-

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



# Stratford poet to launch new book, *Essays of Light*, with musical performance at Revival House Nov. 25

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

To launch his third poetry collection, *Essays of Light*, award-winning Stratford poet and performer David Stones is joining forces with a trio of celebrated local musicians and vocalists to perform a selection of poems from his new book at Revival House Nov. 25.

Stones, who has been performing his poetry, often to music, for more than a decade since the launch of his first poetry collection, *Infinite Sequels*, will join local keyboardist and vocalist Kelly Walker, actor and vocalist Marcus Nance, and cellist and composer Ben Bolt-Martin for the show beginning at 7 p.m.

“Some of my work has been turned into song,” Stones told the Times in a recent interview. “Marcus Nance is a great Shakespearean and Festival actor. Kelly Walker, I do a lot of shows with him ... and I have performed with Ben Bolt-Martin before. I had a show, *WordSong*, we did together a year ago. Kelly and Ben wrote three songs based on my lyrics and Marcus was the singer, so I sort of recruited them back to launch *Essays of Light* and a new show called *Essays of Light*.”

“Hopefully we can turn it into something more than just the one-off and we can spin it into something a bit larger. We can do clubs, wineries; that’s what Kelly and I do. ... I like to perform poetry to music. It really brings the words off the page for people. Cello is wonderful with my work, as is the piano.”

*Essays of Light* is a collection of 80 new poems Stones wrote over roughly a year and a half. Already, the book is gaining high praise from some of Canada’s most renowned poets including former poet laureate and a friend of Stones’, George Elliott Clarke, who says in a blurb at the beginning of the book that Stones’ latest poems “are marvels, effortlessly luminous, so tender in compassion, so tren-

chant in elegance. ... David Stones is so deft a poet that even the white space between stanzas seems to sing and then echo melodically once a page is turned.”

Stones said his poetry in this collection is themed around 13th century Persian poet Rumi’s perspective on light, which Stones said can be best summarized by lyrics from Canadian singer, songwriter and poet Leonard Cohen’s song, “Anthem.”

“Rumi very famously said, ‘The wound is the place where the light gets in,’ and I contend Leonard Cohen maneuvered that into ‘there is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.’ It’s the same expression. You need to be wounded or cracked or broken; that is what moves you forward. It’s almost like learning from your mistakes – it’s all the same kind of notion.”

“So, I started building these poems. I write about the three L’s of life: love, longing and loss. Loving what you have, including people, so there are love poems in here. Longing, sort of longing after the things that we don’t have and wish that we had. And certainly mourning – sometimes tragically, sometimes reflectively – the things that we’ve lost. So, the poems are, generally speaking, about those three themes. You can apply any one of those three themes to any poem in the book.”

Stones hopes poetry lovers and those who may not appreciate the art form as much will consider seeing him perform, if not at his Stratford book launch then at one of his other performances in nearby cities like London and Toronto. He says by putting his poetry to music, building theatrical sets for his readings and having some of his work turned into song, his work tends to appeal to people who otherwise may not appreciate spoken-word poetry.

To purchase tickets for Stones’ book launch at Revival House, visit [www.ticketscene.ca/events/49707/](http://www.ticketscene.ca/events/49707/).



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

**BOOK LAUNCH**  
Stratford poet and performer David Stones holds his new poetry collection, *Essays of Light*, ahead of the launch of the book at Stratford’s Revival House Nov. 25.

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# Former Stratford Festival director delves into impacts of Chinese Exclusion Act in new documentary, *Exclusion: Beyond the Silence*

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For nearly three decades in the first half of the 20th century, the Canadian Government outlawed Chinese immigration and impeded family reunification, community development, social integration and economic equality among Chinese Canadians through the Chinese Immigration Act, commonly known as the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Enacted in 1923 as the culmination of anti-Chinese racism and policies including the preceding \$500 Chinese head taxes, which it replaced, the Chinese Exclusion Act almost entirely prevented immigration to Canada from China until it was repealed in 1947, effectively separating families for generations, the impact of which is still felt by Chinese-Canadian families today. Over the past four-and-a-half years, former Stratford Festival director, actor and playwright Keira Loughran teamed up with producers from Stratford's Ballinran Entertainment to explore the impacts of that racist, anti-immigration legislation in a new documentary, *Exclusion: Beyond the Silence*.

"In February (2020), we did an under-



## IMPACTS OF CHINESE EXCLUSION

(BALLINRAN ENTERTAINMENT PHOTO)

*Exclusion: Beyond the Silence* director Keira Loughran (centre) interviews a great aunt (right) with the help of a translator (left) in the ancestral hall in Guanzui Village, Guangdong, China.

cover film in Wuhan on the Coronavirus, which we thought was an isolated China

thing, and of course weeks after that, it spread around the whole world. So, I had my eyes out for stories that were tied to COVID because, at the time, everybody was looking for the angle on COVID," said Ballinran Entertainment executive producer Craig Thompson. "In May of 2020, I read an article in *The Globe and Mail*; one of the oldest women in Canada, Foon Hay Lum, age 111, dies in a Toronto nursing home. I read the story and I said, 'Not only is this a COVID story, this article talks about this woman surviving something I'd never heard of – the exclusion act.'

"The very next day, I did some digging and I got in touch with her granddaughter, Helen (Lee) ... and I said, 'This is an amazing story, Helen.' ... I immediately got the rights to the story."

As a result of the exclusion act, Foon Hay Lum was separated from her husband, Jack, for more than 30 years – a tragically common story among Chinese Canadians from that generation. At the time the story of Foon Hay Lum's death broke, Thompson had been working with Loughran on another project. While Loughran's family was not impacted by the exclusion act, her own grandmother, Jean Lumb, was instrumental in getting the legislation reversed and was the first Chinese-Canadian woman to be named to the Order of Canada.

When Thompson asked Loughran if she'd be interested in working with him on a documentary about the generational impacts of the exclusion act, she jumped at the chance.

"When I left the Festival, one of the reasons I left the office was to have more time to work on my own artistic projects," Loughran said. "What I was researching

was my family history, which I could date back to the Chinese Exclusion Act. My grandfather (featured) in the film had come to Canada in 1921, but I knew as a kid that my grandmother had been like a superstar, so it kept me with a sort of feeling of pride and place in the community. Because I was doing this research, I started to recognize that the Chinese audience for the film, for this topic, was really spread out across the country and the chances of any story routed in that being able to reach them was more likely through film (than theatre).

"... So when (Craig) brought this project to me, there were two things that struck me. One was that I did know about the exclusion act and if (Foon Hay Lum) was 111 years old and that she'd been separated from her husband, she had a lived experience and those stories were possibly in her family and were very different from mine because my family had been here, my grandmothers were both born in Canada. The other thing I said was, 'I don't know if this is of interest or not, or even if this is a thing, but her last name is the same as mine in Chinese.' From my preliminary research and the era from which those people were coming over, it's not a huge family name. ... There might be a connection there."

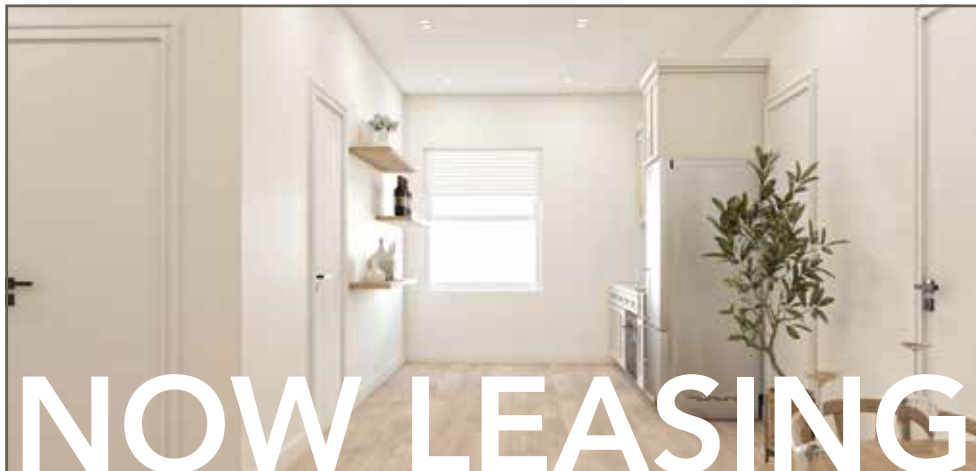
Thompson, in turn, encouraged Loughran to follow those threads as a documentary storyteller. She met with Lee, spoke with her about her grandmother's experience, learned about her family and began digging into her own family's story.

In those early days of her research, Loughran said she was struck by the parallels between the anti-Chinese racism of Foon Hay Lum's time and the uptick in outward anti-Chinese racism of the COVID-19 pandemic, something that spurred on Loughran's drive to achieve activism through her art.

"It really upset me that elder women were bearing the brunt of it; they were the ones who were being spat on in the street," Loughran said. "They were the ones being pushed, they were the ones in these (Chinese nursing) homes not able to be with their families. The irony of it was such an unknown story. The fact that Foon Hay was separated from her husband during those years of the exclusion act, and now in COVID, she can't be visited by her granddaughter. ... It's so unfair because of the story of exclusion not being known."

Lee and Loughran travelled across Canada speaking with Chinese-Canadians about their family members' experiences with the exclusion act and how its impacts spanned generations. The pair and Ballinran's production team also travelled to China's Guangdong Province, where Loughran and Lee met members of their extended families for the first time, many of whom already knew who they were.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 27



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# Stratford Symphony Orchestra celebrates 20 seasons with double-bass legend Joel Quarrington

ALEX HUNT

*Times Correspondent*

The Stratford Symphony Orchestra (SSO) is celebrating a huge milestone by performing with a legend.

Double-bass player Joel Quarrington will accompany SSO music director and conductor William Rowson in-concert at Avondale United Church Nov. 16.

"Well, anytime a double-bass player gets asked to solo with an orchestra is a special event because double-bass concertos are rarely performed, so it's always a significant event, and the fact that we have two great pieces in the program is remarkable," Quarrington said.

"It's very exciting to do this unique concert with the audience in Stratford. It has a great arts background and I've played many concerts here. I look forward to returning every time."

The 20th -season celebration concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. The program will feature works such as Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 and Koussevitzky's Concerto for



## STRATFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(A.J. ASHLEY PHOTO)

Renowned double-bass player Joel Quarrington is thrilled to celebrate the Stratford Symphony Orchestra's 20th anniversary with the Stratford community.

Bass, Op. 3.

"Dvorak's Symphony No. 9, which is a huge piece of orchestral repertoire, it's

very famous and celebrated and loved and it will be the first time I will be doing that symphony here," said Rowson. "It's some-

thing that we had wanted to do as a goal, and I can't wait to share it with everybody.

"This is the first time that I'll be meeting and working with Joel Quarrington. I'm very excited for this experience. It's a real privilege; I think Joel Quarrington is a legend and I've been telling all my friends about this."

A.J. Ashley, general manager of Stratford Symphony Orchestra, said he's very excited to have Quarrington join the Stratford Symphony Orchestra and is looking forward to seeing the double-bass duet featuring Quarrington and Symphony member Dan Armstrong during the concert.

"It's amazing to spread the joy of music to Stratford and the surrounding area. We have an amazingly talented group of musicians that love sharing their music," said Ashley. "Watching our audience enjoy our concerts makes me want to ensure that we can continue performing for years to come."

Tickets for the 20th-season celebration concert are available online at [www.StratfordSymphony.ca](http://www.StratfordSymphony.ca).

## Former Stratford Festival director delves into impacts of Chinese Exclusion Act in new documentary, *Exclusion: Beyond the Silence*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

"What we found was we had two very personal stories because Helen and I were alive and we could tell about this period of exclusion in a very personal way," Loughran said, adding that the 100th anniversary of the passing of the exclusion act in 2023 and the resultant upswell of activism among the descendants of those Chinese-Canadians who were directly impacted by it made the story they were telling that much more timely.

"For the first time, people were willing to talk. In the community before, because of the trauma, the stories were at risk of being lost. At the 100th anniversary celebration, that third, fourth generation started to ask questions and that was happening for people in their 70s, people who were 50, people who were 40, 30, 20. We all started to come together and come on this journey to find our stories together. Because we knew about it, we were able to shoot a lot of those events and really document that groundswell of activity and community building and activism, which was very inspiring and insightful for me."

While in China, a place with which nei-



## PERSONAL STORIES

(BALLINRAN ENTERTAINMENT PHOTO)

Helen Lee (right) meeting her relatives in Mazhou Village, Guangdong, China, and connects them with her mother back in Canada.

ther Loughran or Lee felt connected before shooting this film, they found themselves

welcomed with warmth and understanding everywhere they turned, both by the members of their own families they had never met and total strangers who understood the importance of the story they were trying to tell and did everything in their power to help them tell it.

"The time in China and being able to connect with family there completed the story," Loughran said. "... We didn't know what was in China. ... It was pretty exciting; it was kind of that feeling of being able to discover something that really healed a lot and offered a chance for many descendants to look for their stories, to rediscover their community."

*Exclusion: Beyond the Silence* will premiere at Toronto's 28th Reel Asian International Film Festival at the TIFF Lightbox on Nov. 16. Visit [www.reelasian.com/festival-events/exclusion-beyond-the-silence/](http://www.reelasian.com/festival-events/exclusion-beyond-the-silence/) for more information and to purchase tickets to the premiere.

For Stratford locals, Thompson said Ballinran Entertainment will also screen the film at the Tom Patterson Theatre on Dec. 5. It will be broadcast on Telus, Knowledge, Rogers OMNI and YES TV next year.

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[WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM](http://WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM)

# Acclaimed actor Rod Beattie returns to the museum with “A Christmas Carol”

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Return to the Stratford Perth Museum again this year for the iconic performance of Rod Beattie’s one-man show, “A Christmas Carol.”

Watch Beattie delight the audience as he seamlessly morphs from one beloved character to the next. He always thought the performed versions of the Dickens classic have been too long, claiming it is a ghost story and should only be about an hour long. He also thought someone could write the essence of the story in a format of about an hour and it would be a better representation of the book in a live form.

“I thought, hey, I could do that. Then I thought who could I get to play a whole bunch of different characters in the same outing and I thought, hey, I could do that,” Beattie said. “The first thing I did was to cut what I regard as the preachy bits. There’s quite a lot that is heavily religious. I always sort of glossed over that. Then I streamlined. Dickens is a wonderful and economic writer but it is mid 19th-century prose and that’s not what you would call page turning now.”

He stayed true to Dickens’ language – there was little that he changed – though there are two things he stole from Alistair Simms’ film. What those things are, he is tight lipped about, so keep an eye out for something that might seem uncharacteristically familiar.

Shifting from character to character takes great skill and Beattie is well prac-



## ONE MAN SHOW

Rod Beattie performs in the one-man adaptation of “A Christmas Carol.”

ticed in the art as those acquainted with his character, Walt Wingfield, and the Dan Needles series Letters from Wingfield farm will attest. For “A Christmas Carol,” he has cast a number of different actors he knows as characters in the story

and morphs into them seamlessly.

“In this case, the narrator is Canadian as he talks just as I talk. The characters are rich so I got to cast a number of actors that I have known or known of and that was a lot of fun. I’ve changed the cast

a bit from time to time as I’ve become more certain who they are modelled for,” shared Beattie.

Scrooge is the one that he has changed the most because he had his influence of his dad reading the story to him as a child and also had a record of Lionel Barrymore reading the story. While he’s been told that some of his influences on characters are recognizable, he hesitates to reveal his inspirations.

“For example, the ghost of Christmas past is Sir John Gielgud. He is a great British actor. He was Hamlet, he was the valet in the movie, Arthur,” he said, refusing to share any more.

As with any actor in any role, or in this case many roles, there are favourite moments in the story that Beattie enjoys performing.

“The gradual appearance of Jacob Marley is quite the masterpiece. It’s one of the things we haven’t changed much at all, it is trimmed down a bit but it’s a brilliant piece of writing. And of course, when Scrooge’s reformation happens and he wakes up born again, that’s one of the great moments in literature or in theatre. There’s a hint in it that he may have dreamed it,” said Beattie.

This year, proceeds from ticket sales are, in part, being donated to the charity, A Child’s Smile. There will be six performances; Dec. 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 and 23, all at 2 p.m. at the Stratford Perth Museum. At \$45 each, tickets can be purchased at [www.stratfordperthmuseum.ca/rod-beatties-a-christmas-carol](http://www.stratfordperthmuseum.ca/rod-beatties-a-christmas-carol).

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

# Festival of Lights celebrated at Greenwood Court

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Oct. 31 wasn’t just Halloween this year. It was also the first day of Diwali, the Indian festival of lights.

Stratford city councillor and deputy mayor Harjinder Nijjar was at Greenwood Court that day for the celebration to give residents who may not know much about the festival

some context and to share what it means.

“I’m so excited to be here to celebrate with you,” Nijjar told the staff and residents that gathered in the atrium to hear more about the festival. “It originally came from India where we have all different religions. The Hindus, the Sikh, all the religions get together and they celebrate.”

Diwali symbolizes the victory of Dharma over Adharma, light over darkness. It

is typically celebrated across a number of days with joyous celebration which includes fireworks, the lighting of diyas (oil lamps), and decorating homes with colourful adornments.

It also includes sweets, as Nijjar explained. Afterwards, staff member Laura Kindler went around the room giving residents Indian sweets.

This is the first Diwali celebration where

recreational fireworks were allowed in Stratford. Nijjar put forward a motion, which subsequently passed at the council meeting on July 2, whereby Diwali was included in the City of Stratford’s fireworks bylaw, meaning they are now allowed on the first day of Diwali.

Before that amendment, recreational fireworks were only permitted in city limits on Victoria Day and Canada Day.



Greenwood Court staff and city councillor Harjinder Nijjar pose for Diwali, festival of lights. Back: Harjinder Nijjar, Cheryll Nijjar, Laura Kindler, Michael Gervais, Dimitrios Paulidis, Shannon Golbeck Chelsea-Anne Woolridge. Front: Sherri Lemke, Mary Anne Debrouwer, Sierra Giles, Theresa Burns.



Laura Kindler hands out Indian sweets to a resident at Greenwood Court on Oct. 31, the first day of Diwali, the festival of lights.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTOS)

# Ongoing Songwriter Series at The Bunker gives musicians from far and wide a chance to share their stories

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Thanks to The Bunker Performance Lounges and Café's growing reputation as an intimate and unique performance venue, both emerging and established singer-songwriters have been flocking to Stratford to share their stories and perform their original music as part of The Bunker's ongoing Songwriter Series.

Following the success of The Bunker's winter, spring and summer songwriter series earlier this year, venue owner John Crawford decided to continue inviting songwriters to perform on the last Friday of every month this fall. With one more performance to go for the fall series – this one on Nov. 29 featuring singer-songwriters Melissa Dutch, Odd Marshall and Mitch Szitas – the model has proven successful for the musicians who perform and the locals who come to listen.

"We've been running it for about a year now and it's similar to what we do every single Friday where we have original singer-songwriters in to showcase their original songs," Crawford said. "Normally, we would have the odd cover set in because people love covers, but then we thought last year it would be kind of a nice idea to reserve one Friday (every month) just for all originals; something people can kind of rely on where they can come hear music they can't hear anywhere else, and songs that artists aren't really able to perform anywhere else."

Earlier this year, Crawford said The Bunker changed the format of the Songwriter Series slightly to be more of a writers' round. Since then, the shows have featured three unique singer-songwriters, each of whom take turns playing original songs and sharing the stories behind those songs. The intimate atmosphere of the venue, Crawford said, encourages the artists to interact with the audience during the show, and vice versa.

The shows are also "pay-what-you-can," allowing Crawford and the team at The Bunker to pay the musicians for their sets without putting up too much of a financial barrier for those who want to come and listen to music from artists they may have never listened to before.

And attracting new talent every month hasn't been an issue at all. According to Crawford, The Bunker's reputation as a niche venue welcoming of all artists has spread across the region and beyond, and musicians are lining up to perform there.

That's how Dutch, a singer-songwriter from Hamilton, heard about the Stratford venue.

"There's a lot of colleagues that I have who have been participating at The Bunker, so I heard about it kind of through the grapevine here in Hamilton – there's even whispers here about what they're doing," Dutch said.

The emerging artist describes her music as a mixture of the hard-hitting pop and alternative work of artists like Lady Gaga and Florence & The Machine, and the heartfelt, soulful music of Sarah McLachlan and Adele. Her powerful vocals are also influenced by the work of jazz singers Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday.

"I have a single that's going to be coming out on Dec. 6 called 'All Out Of The Blue,' and it was recorded live off the floor at Park Street Gasworks in Hamilton with my live band," Dutch said. "It has some jazz sensibilities and it's like a moody, warm ballad about unrequited love at Christmas time."

Dutch said she will perform her new single ahead of its official launch at The Bunker at the Nov. 29 Fall Songwriter Series finale, which begins at 8 p.m., and she's excited to share the story behind that song with a Stratford audience.

For more information about the Songwriter Series and other performances at The Bunker Performance Lounge & Café, visit [www.bunkerstratford.com](http://www.bunkerstratford.com).

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## European pastries offered at the Stratford Farmers' Market



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

### 20 YEARS AND COUNTING

Jack and Eileen Crowston also sell freshly brewed coffee to go with their homestyle baking at the Saturday farmers' market in Stratford.

GARY WEST

*Times Correspondent*

Stratford's Rotary Complex was abuzz with activity Nov. 9 with the Rotary Club of Stratford's Christmas Craft Festival in the community hall, hockey games in the arena, a school volleyball tournament in the Agriplex and a bustling Farmers' Market in the market building.

Longtime market baker Eileen Crowston along with her son, Jack Crowston, were sold out of their famous and popular cinnamon buns by 10:30 a.m. due to the large crowd of visitors who heard about their famous go-to delicacy.

The pair have been regular bakers at the popular market for 20 years and counting, and both the mother and son agree that Jack

Crowston's own Christmas shortbread is again flying off the shelf before Christmas.

They also sell freshly baked bread, scones and muffins with original recipes handed down from Eileen Crowston's mother and father, who were bakers in Germany and brought their own tasty baking recipes with them.

The Stratford and District Agricultural Society, which manages the market, reminds everyone of the upcoming annual United Way Bacon and Egg Breakfast at the market on Saturday, Nov. 16 from 7 a.m. until noon.

One-hundred per cent of the money raised goes to help this year's fundraising for the United Way Perth-Huron.

The farmers market runs every Saturday from 7 a.m. until noon.

## Popcorn at the Stratford Farmers' Market with a Rostock and Tavistock connection



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

### GET POPPED

Pictured, Grant Kaufman and Don Eckhardt show their freshly popped kettle corn from their antique popcorn cart at their entrance location at the Stratford Farmers' Market on Saturday.

GARY WEST

*Times Correspondent*

Most shoppers heading to the Stratford Farmers' Market at the city's Burnside Agriplex are there on Saturday mornings to buy their locally grown vegetables, fruit, meat, cheese, fresh baking and eggs.

There is one more treat that market visitors are also indulging in, and that is freshly popped Crazee Kernel's kettle corn.

Don Eckhardt from Rostock and Grant Kaufman from Tavistock sell bags of popcorn in flavours one might never have

heard of.

They have sweet and salty, caramel, dill pickle, white cheddar, salt and vinegar and many other colourful and eclectic flavours.

They are not only serving freshly popped kettle corn at the market from 7 a.m. to noon every Saturday, but they also sell their popcorn at events like weddings, anniversaries and fundraisers for service clubs.

Many might have seen them at this year's Blythe Steam Show, Moparfest in New Hamburg, Embro Truck and Tractor Pulls and various outdoor music festivals.

# Climate Conversations returns for third session, Adapting to a Changing World

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

[stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

The third Climate Conversation of the series will deal with being prepared for severe climate events: floods, powerful storms and forest fires.

Through the use of building and land retrofit, organizers of the speaker series hope to share how we can develop strategies to withstand the destructive results of climate change, saving lives and property.

Dr. Gordon McBean is a specialist in reduction of loss from climate events. He will share steps cities and individuals can take in urban forestry, water management, buildings and construction, and personal preparedness.

Dr. McBean works with the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) based at Western University. He is a

Member of the orders of Canada and Ontario, an adjunct research professor in the department of physics and astronomy at Western University and policy research chair at ICLR. He was a lead scientist in development of IPCC Science Reports, for which the IPCC received a Nobel Prize.

**Event: Climate Conversations #3 Adapting to a Changing World**

**Speaker: Dr. Gordon McBean, Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction due to Climate Change, UWO**

**Date: Thursday, Nov. 28**

**Time: 7 p.m.**

**Location: Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E**

**Cost: free, refreshments provided**

Note: There will also be an invited seminar with Dr. McBean for builders, city personnel and council members on the afternoon of Nov. 28.



## ...are you ready?

Climate Conversations November Topic:

Adapting to Our Changing World:  
Building & Land Retrofit & Adaptation Measures

Guest Speaker: Dr. Gordon McBean, Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, University of Western

Location: Army and Navy, 151 Lorne Ave E.

Date: Thursday, November 28th

Time: 7:00 PM

Cost: Free!

Dr. Gordon McBean is a specialist in reduction of loss from climate events, from floods to storm damage to fires. He will share steps cities and individuals can do in urban forestry and water management, buildings and construction, and personal preparedness.

What can you do to protect yourself, your community and your loved ones from climate damage?

Please scan the QR code to learn more and register for this event.  
Registration is encouraged.





# Marking Walt Wingfield's 40th anniversary

AL DICKIE

Times Contributor

It was 1984 at the Orange Hall in the Village of Rosemont, Ont. Three lifelong pals were about to introduce a Canadian theatrical institution. They had no idea at the time.

"We just wanted to put on the best play we could to please ourselves and those who showed up to see it," producer and director Doug Beattie said, reflecting on that first performance.

Stratford's Rod Beattie gives life and voice to Walt Wingfield and his farm neighbours.

The play, written by Dan Needles, was Letter from Wingfield Farm about a Toronto stockbroker who gives up his plush job to buy a farm in the fictional southwestern Ontario Township of Persephone.

The play was based on columns Needles wrote for two local weeklies. Today he is recognized as one of Canada's pre-eminent playwrights and a sage of village life in Canada. He continues to work his 40-acre farm in Simcoe County, writes books and magazine articles, and does public speaking about rural life. Needles points out in his latest book, *Finding Larkspur*, that the Wingfield Chronicles are the longest series of stage plays in Canadian theatrical history.

An acclaimed actor, Rod Beattie acted in more than 50 plays at the Stratford Festival over 18 seasons and is approaching 5,000 performances of the Wingfield plays across Canada.

Many of the Wingfield characters Needles created were based on his farm neighbours. They were in the audience that first night in Rosemont. They were pleased to be part of the Wingfield scene.

"If we have a run of bad luck, Danny takes it and turns it into a funny story," writes Alvin Currie, farmer and market gardener, in a blurb for *Finding Larkspur* book.

Letter from Wingfield Farm enjoyed success around southwestern Ontario after its debut but the epiphany came about two years after following a call from Miles Potter, the artistic director of the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, B.C.

"I was sceptical," said Rod, "What interest could a B.C. audience have in a play set in southwestern Ontario farm country?"

Plenty, as it turned out.

Over a four-week run, it played to over 100 per cent capacity. The Belfry was in deep financial difficulty at the time. The play pulled it back from the brink and, reflecting on the success after his initial scepticism, Rod Beattie said "I realized that western farmers who didn't go bankrupt retired to Victoria."

Rod Beattie told Needles and Doug Beattie they needed a trilogy of plays. Needles wrote two more and continued until the Wingfield portfolio reached seven plays.

In 2022, Rod Beattie performed all seven on consecutive weeks for the first time to sold out audiences at the Stratford Perth Museum, produced and directed by his brother, Doug Beattie.

The plays have been performed in venues across Canada from Halifax to Victoria. They have been especially welcomed in rural communities across the country.

Both Needles and Rod Beattie were made members of the Order of Canada for their services to Canadian theatre. Both of their citations noted their contribution for helping to develop live theatre outside the big cities. Needles was also awarded a



## 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Rod Beattie, Doug Beattie and Dan Needles of the Wingfield Farm series.

Stephen Leacock Medal for his book *With Axe and Flax*, a History of Persephone Township.

That the three continue working together after four decades is unique in the theatrical community. Twenty years ago, Needles observed that "at this stage, Gilbert and Sullivan were only communicating through their lawyers."

Their relationship actually goes back a lot further. They grew up together in midtown Toronto, worked summers in and around the Needles family farm and, at university, appeared together in a production of *Hamlet*.

Needles created a rural Canadian version of *Camelot*, Doug Beattie directs and Rod Beattie has played every date of the Wingfield plays.

As Rod Beattie prepares to perform his adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* next month at the Stratford Perth Museum, he reflects on his relationship with Walt Wingfield and the people of Persephone Township.

"I've always felt a slightly pacific joyfulness about going to Persephone Township for a while and taking other people with me," he said. "It's a good place and a healing place."

Tickets for Rod Beattie's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, with six performances over the Dec. 14 and 21 weekends, are available through the Stratford Perth Museum website.

Needles' book, *Finding Larkspur A Return to Village Life* is available at Fanfare Books in Stratford.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## Passing judgment too quickly



BRUCE WHITAKER

Times Freelance Columnist

In Stratford, like most small towns, we have high expectations of the place we live. It is indeed a beautiful setting with lots to offer including yummy restaurants, diverse retailers and outstanding entertainment. We, as a collective community however, are not yet fully satisfied. We want our surroundings to contribute to an even better quality of life, and why not?

Using the city's services each

day, we are well aware of the offerings, both good and bad. It might be the murky colour of the water from the sink, the condition of our roads, the smoothness of the ice at the Rotary Complex or the flowers lining our main streets in the summer. Through everyday experiences, we feel we have the knowledge to judge critically. The fact is that often we do not have complete information.

Most of us tend to judge based on what we instantly experience. An opinion, positive or negative, is formed and sometimes hardened. Automatic judgment is a legacy from crucial survival responses that primed us to either approach or avoid a person. Our brains are wired to make automatic judgments so that we can move through the world without spending much time or energy on understanding everything we see. Understanding is harder as it requires deep thinking, patience, compassion and an open mind.

The Market Square opened

on Canada Day in 2017 to a variety of reviews. Many appreciated the removal of the idling buses, thus eliminating the noise and pollution that was preventing folks from coming together in our downtown core. While many complained about the lack of architectural design and the dearth of shade from the sun. Interestingly enough, most squares around the world are somewhat nondescript – a large concrete flooring – as they rely on people to bring life to them. The sparse design enables easy facilitation of events and activities. We just needed a bit of patience.

After seven years, the trees are providing just enough shade. Is the space perfect? No. It is very unfortunate that the water feature no longer works. The Market Square, however, is evolving. The square's growth depends on all of us contributing to its evolution.

Similarly, when a community group was looking for approval of a skatepark, one city coun-

cillor raised concerns of skateboards careening off ramps into oncoming trains. A few residents believed that vehicles would "run over the users" as they entered and exited. Taking the time to gather a bit more information would have assuaged people of such concerns as the design of the park was intentionally oriented for safety. Being close to a major road provides visibility discouraging unsavoury types from frequenting the park. Most residents now have a much more favourable opinion of the park and its users.

The downtown bus terminal is another example of a project that immediately garnered criticism. Many felt the cost was excessive while others felt the washrooms were unsuitable for the demand. It would seem many of these criticisms have now been addressed. At least, there remains little negative chatter. The spacious terminal is now an active spot for city transit, between city transit and

other connections.

Recently, Huron Street construction was completed and the road was converted from two lanes of traffic in each direction to one lane. With the street significantly over budget, there was good reason for residents to be skeptical. Then, when the work was done to reduce the street to two lanes, shifting to a turning lane, many screamed bloody hell. Though the price tag remains a concern, one lane of traffic in each direction seems to be working well, enabling drivers to turn without disrupting traffic.

Moving forward, perhaps we can take more time to appreciate what our fair city offers us rather than focusing on what's missing. The suggestion is not to let go of improving things, rather it is to acknowledge the positive changes and to realize that perfection is not the end game. Let's also remain curious, knowing there is something about the situation that we may not fully understand.

# Highlights from Perth County Holstein Club Awards Banquet



Winner of the Earl Hooper Award was Lexi Johnston accepting the award from director Trevor Willows for being the top 4-H Perth County Dairy club member in 2024.



Steve Squibb accepts the Heart of the Herd Award for their cow, Squibbland Rita Windbrook, from Perth County Holstein director Luis Velazquez.



Hans Borgijink from Herrdink Farms Ltd. is presented with the county's Top Herd Management Award from Perth Lactanet representative Elizabeth LeBlanc.



From left, Dennis, Elayna and Nicole Nook received the highest individual cow award from Elizabeth LeBlanc of Lactanet with Newmorning Tadoo Shannon 3421, which had a composite BCA of 449.3.



From left, Ralph and Paulette Coneybears receive Perth County's highest herd average for 75 records or more with a 317.3 BCA herd average from Elizabeth LeBlanc from Lactanet. (GARY WEST PHOTOS)



There were nine 4-H dairy club members who were selected to represent Perth County at the upcoming Royal Agriculture Winter fair in Toronto. They include, from left, Hailey Peters, Addison Hyatt, Meaghan Weitzel, Maddy Dixon, Gracie Weitzel, Jace Nook, Lexi Wilhelm and Jackson Kaufman. Absent was Rhett Terpstra.

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# Cultivating simple joys in November



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

November, with its crisp air and golden leaves, serves as a bridge between the vibrancy of autumn and the quietness of winter. It's a month marked by shorter days, cooler temperatures, and the anticipation of the holiday season.

As nature winds down and prepares for winter, we too can embrace the simplicity of the season by cultivating small joys. There are so many small, simple things that you can do to make November much more meaningful and fulfilling for you and your family.

Here are some ways to invite happiness into your November and appreciate life's simpler pleasures.

## 1. Embrace Seasonal Scenery

November has a quiet beauty, with trees shedding the last of their colorful leaves and landscapes transforming into a softer palette. Take time to go for a walk, even if it's just around your neighborhood, and pay attention to the small details: the way frost glitters in the morning, the crunch of leaves under-

foot, the mist that hovers over fields.

Slow down and immerse yourself in nature, practicing mindfulness by taking in each sensation. Not only does time outdoors improve mental well-being, but it also fosters a sense of connection to the world around you.

## 2. Savor Comfort Foods

There's a warmth and joy that comes from cooking and savoring seasonal foods. November's cooler weather invites us to bring out hearty, comforting recipes like soups, stews, and baked goods. Try making a pot of homemade soup with seasonal vegetables, bake a loaf of bread, or indulge in something sweet, like pumpkin or apple pie. Cooking can be both a grounding and creative activity, allowing you to slow down and focus on each step.

## 3. Practice Gratitude

November can be a time to reflect and take stock of all that we have around us that's wonderful. Take a few minutes each day to reflect on what you're thankful for, whether it's the people in your life, the things you own, or the experiences you've had.

You may want to start a gratitude journal, jotting down three to five things that bring you joy every day. By acknowledging the good in your life, you can create space for happiness to grow and gain a deeper appreciation for the present moment.

## 4. Create Cozy Spaces

As temperatures drop, there's something wonderfully comforting about making your home feel warm and inviting. Cultivate coziness by setting up a

space where you can unwind. Light a few candles, put on a soft blanket, and make yourself a cup of tea or hot cocoa.

Small changes, like swapping out lighter linens for warmer ones or adding a few seasonal decorations, can transform your living space and make it feel like a sanctuary. Even a small, dedicated cozy corner can become a retreat where you read, journal, or simply relax. The act of creating a comforting environment is itself a way to nurture joy in the season.

## 5. Connect with Loved Ones

As the year winds down, use November as a time to reconnect with family and friends.

Whether it's through a long phone call, a shared meal, or a handwritten letter, reaching out to others can uplift your spirits. Consider hosting a small, informal gathering to bring people together without the pressures of holiday formality. Sometimes, the best conversations and memories happen during these quieter, more spontaneous moments.

## 6. Engage in a Creative Activity

November's

slower pace provides an excellent opportunity to engage in creative activities that bring joy and self-expression. Whether you enjoy painting, knitting, photography, or writing, setting aside time for creativity can be a powerful way to cultivate happiness.

## 7. Take Time to Reflect

With the year coming to a close, November can be an ideal month for introspection. Reflect on the past months and consider what has brought you happiness, what you've learned, and what you hope to carry into the future. This can be as simple as sitting quietly with a cup of tea or journaling about your

thoughts. By taking this time for yourself, you're honoring the experiences you've had and making space to embrace whatever lies ahead with clarity and intention.

November may lack the brightness of spring or the festivities of December, but it can still offer a unique opportunity to find joy in life's quieter moments. Embrace the calm, look for beauty, and find small ways to celebrate each day. In doing so, November becomes a month of peaceful joy, enriching us with experiences and memories that linger long after winter begins.

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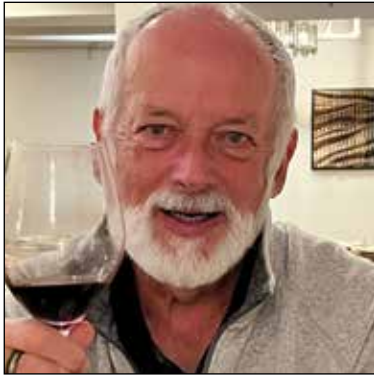
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# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: A place where the animals really are job one



PAUL KNOWLES

*Sun Contributor*

Once upon a time, we all visited zoos and attractions featuring marine animals without asking any questions about animal welfare, health, or exploitation. Those days, thank goodness, are mostly behind us. Today, attractions like Ontario's own Marineland are being investigated and criticized, zoos are being held to much higher standards than before and visitors to these kinds of attractions are asking much harder questions than we once did.

All of which will explain why, when I as a travel journalist am invited to visit an attraction that features animals in captivity, it's my challenging responsibility to determine if this is a legitimate enterprise or if it's an



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

**Dolphins seem to have a whale of a time, entertaining their guests at the Dolphin Research Center.**

other example of exploitation or even cruelty.

So, I am delighted to report that, in my opinion, the Dolphin Research Center passes any ethics test with high, high marks. This is a place that is doing really good stuff, treating its marine charges with respect and utmost care, and educating thousands of people about our relationship with some of the amazing creatures that share this planet with us.

The Dolphin Research Center is located on Grassy Key in the Florida Keys, about halfway down that stunning Overseas Highway drive from Key Largo to Key West. We were guided around the facility by Allie Proskovec, the centre's dedicated and

enthusiastic director of media and marketing.

She's especially enthusiastic because the not-for-profit centre is in the midst of a significant expansion. Now, in many cases that might mean that the visitor centre is being enlarged, or a restaurant is being added. Not at the Dolphin Research Center where the focus is on the animals. This expansion means the area available to the dolphins is being enlarged by three times and the sea lion habitat is also being enlarged.

Here, it's all about the dolphins and the other creatures that are in the care of these very caring people. All of the animals – 27 dolphins, three sea lions, five birds and two African spurred tortoises – are

rescue animals or born at the centre. They cannot be safely released into the wild. However, the centre also rescues, rehabilitates and releases animals. The centre is the only licensed marine-mammal rescue operation in the Keys, and the team includes a veterinarian. In addition to rescu-

ing and rehabilitating dolphins, the staff also includes a manatee rescue team that rescues injured manatees, and then hands them off to medical facilities that treat these amazing mammals and return them to their natural habitat. There is no permanent manatee habitat at the Dolphin Research Center.

The centre offers many programs that allow human visitors to interact with the dolphins, including swimming with the animals. But Proskovec stresses the fact that the dolphins are always the decisionmakers about what they choose to do or not to do. Fundamental to the mandate of the centre is the goal of demonstrating the remarkable intelligence of the marine creatures while imposing no demands or causing any anxiety for the dolphins.

Dolphins live a long time – in the wild, typically until their late teens to mid 20s, but at the Research Center, it can be much longer. Proskovec introduced us to one of their residents who was 44 years old and a second who had now reached 50 years of age. Any dolphin born at the centre or rescued and brought there is guaranteed a life-long home.

"We will never sell or trade an animal," Proskovec said.

Marine-mammal rescue organizations often bring animals they save to the centre, especially young dolphins

that have lost their mothers. We met a dolphin named Ranger who was rescued in the Gulf of Mexico off Texas whose mother had died. Ranger was about a year old at that time; now he is about four years old.

The marine-mammal trainers, education team and other staff members clearly have a warm, personal relationship with the dolphins. They understand each animal's personality and love to tell their stories. We met a dolphin named Jax who had suffered an attack by a shark. Jax survived but lost part of his dorsal fin.

The work at the centre goes beyond care for their charges and education of the public. There is much research carried out as well and the centre has working relationships with a number of educational and research organizations.

The entire team at the Dolphin Research Center is clearly over the moon about the expansion that is currently underway, and who can blame them? The last few years have not held that kind of promise for the centre. First, in 2017, Hurricane Irma devastated the Middle Keys area; staff at the centre were working at reduced pay just so there were enough funds to feed and care for the animals. Then came COVID; visitors stopped coming and, again, there was a financial crunch.

But the team never lost hope, never gave up and never lost sight of their first priority – to provide a home and optimal care for their aquatic charges. That perseverance has paid off as the centre now grows its facilities, its programs and its visitor numbers.

And those visitors can enjoy watching, meeting and even swimming with the dolphins, knowing this is a place where ethics and integrity are built into every decision.

*Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email [pknowles@golden.net](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).*

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Marine mammal trainers working with their aquatic friends.

# Environmental Heroes: It begins with a love for creation

ANNA KOWALCHUK

Times Contributor

Lori welcomes me into her home with a warm hello and a mock warning: “I hope you don’t mind the smell of garlic because I’ve got a kitchen full of it!” I definitely do not mind. She is preparing spaghetti sauce using a tried-and-true recipe passed on to her by a good friend almost 50 years ago.

In some ways, Lori, at 84 years old, is a traditionalist who values continuity and deep roots. But she is also quite modern in her thinking and, in fact, has been on the cutting edge of environmental awareness long before it became a thing, which is why I am now sitting in her and husband James’ bright, comfortable living room preparing to interview her as this issue’s environmental hero.

Lori is not at all comfortable with this label.

“I just try to do what I can and I try to set an example,” she tells me.

I counter that if everyone did as much, we would not be in the environmental predicament in which we find ourselves. This seems to satisfy this lovely, modest lady and we proceed.

“I’ve always loved the outdoors, always loved being in nature,” she recalls.

Looking around at the calming greenery, natural wood sculptures and artwork in her home, I’ve no doubt that this is so. As we know, though, not everyone feels about nature the way Lori does. Her awakening to this fact came in 1968 on a visit to a Michigan Gerber processing plant where

she learned that the astonishingly bright green of the lawns surrounding the facility was created using phosphates, a substance now banned because it is known to cause potentially toxic algae blooms in our waterways, posing a threat to both wildlife and humans.

Thus, Lori began paying closer attention to the environment. When Stratford’s Mayor Ted Blowes started a recycling program in the late 1970s, Lori and her young children were immediately on board, collecting bottles and cans and carting them diligently to the designated location. The CBC program, Suzuki on Science, had been a particular favourite of hers and, later, when Dr. Suzuki took over as the host of The Nature of Things, she remained a strong supporter and advocate for the environmental cause.

In 1980, Lori and her family moved to Yarmouth, N.S. There, she shared her experience of Stratford’s recycling program with a friend she had met. When that friend was elected to Yarmouth’s city council, her conversations with Lori stayed with her, and she worked to implement the city’s first-ever recycling program and, later on, to establish its first composting facility. Lori minimizes her role in these eventualities, but I’ve learned to never underestimate the importance and power of planting idea seeds.

The next few years were rather hectic for Lori and James. An eight-room bed and breakfast, their teenagers and their day jobs kept them more than busy during that time. But the focus always remained

on making wise environmental decisions. While hanging sheets on her outdoor line once, using wooden pegs of course, she recalls overhearing a visitor to the B&B explaining to his new bride what Lori was doing and what a clothesline was!

With children grown and flown, and Stratford once again home, Lori and her husband were invited by the Minister of St. James Anglican Church to head its diocesan environment program called The Greening of Sacred Spaces. James admits, with good humour, that it was Lori who had the expertise and that he was more than happy to let her take the lead. A small group of enthusiasts gathered and this happy band became known as The Green Gang.

They began with the church itself. Energy inefficient lightbulbs were replaced with efficient ones (and even those were carefully turned off when not in use), fellow parishioners were encouraged to recycle wherever possible and signs were posted asking that water be used mindfully. Displays and information stalls were also organized and regularly set up on a variety of environmental topics. And so, for almost 10 years, hearts and minds were touched and changed, sometimes in large ways, sometimes in small.

Then COVID hit and the group dissolved. Lori has now taken a step back from any formal role in her church’s environmental initiative, but she still cares deeply about it. It still matters to her that composting bins are used properly, that only biodegradable cups and non-dis-

posable cutlery are used, that single-use plastics are avoided, and that fair-trade coffee is the type encouraged for use in the church.

Last spring, when Lori learned of the staggering amount of water used in the meat industry, parishioners were encouraged to prepare one or two meat-free meals per week during the time of Lent, with tasty vegetarian recipes provided.

And this passion for respectful environmental practices translates to her home life as well. When I first arrived, Lori kindly offered me a beverage and I opted for water. How pleased I was to see her fill my glass with tap water – no inexplicable and silly plastic water bottles in Lori’s world!

And, while Lori’s home is warm and inviting, what is it that gives her the most joy? It is the outdoor clothesline which she considers herself so very lucky to be able to still use on a regular basis. She makes her own all-purpose cleaner, even donating some to the food bank, she truly enjoys washing her dishes by hand, being very careful of water usage, and she even washes and reuses plastic bags! Who does that? An environmental hero, that’s who.

Lori leaves with me one final thought.

“When we (are able to) see the wonders in the gift of creation, we understand that we are meant to care for it for future generations.”

*If you know of an individual, company or organization that deserves recognition for their innovative and sustainable environmental practices, please contact me at frogs-a-leaping@tutamail.com.*

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T&C APPLY

# Stratford's energy and environment committee working hard at TJ Dolan Natural Area

GARY WEST

*Times Correspondent*

This fall has been a busy time for members of the Stratford energy and environment committee, who are continuing their work to remove invasive species from the TJ Dolan Natural Area.

The focus is on European buckthorn and Norway maple, two species that can spread and overpower other species if they are left unchecked.

Norway maple has a dense leaf canopy that blocks light from getting to the forest floor, and its seedlings can outcompete native trees such as sugar maples, which they are trying to encourage.

Buckthorn is a smaller plant, but will spread quickly due to the heavy seed crop it produces.

It also has the ability to change the nutrient makeup in the soil, robbing other plants of nitrogen required to grow.

Buckthorn is usually found on edges of woodlots, but once it enters the interior, it has a tendency to spread quickly.

Stratford's energy and environment committee members have begun to address the issue this fall by first engaging volunteers and school groups to remove the seedlings.

Previously, the group had planted six flats (128 plants) of woodland plants in the area where the periwinkle had been sprayed in the spring.

They were also removing isolated periwinkle patches in the area to prevent them from spreading to the newly planted plugs.

A tool called a weed wrench shown is used to pry the larger stems out of the ground.

This continues to be an ongoing effort guided by the city's New Invasive Species Management Plan, but good progress continues to be made.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## REMOVING INVASIVE SPECIES

Through a thick bed of autumn leaves, Craig Merkley puts his muscles to work on the weed wrench to pry larger stems out of the ground as Anita Jacobsen holds other branches out of the way.

The two are members of the Stratford energy and environment committee, always improving the ecology of the TJ Dolan Natural Area next to John Street.

## COMING EVENTS Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

### ROCK CLIMBING

Saturday, November 16; 9-11 a.m.

Pursuit Climbing, 615 Erie St Unit 2, Stratford, ON N5A 2N9

Wellspring Stratford hosts Just Show Up. For more information contact Lisa Stacey, lisa@wellspringstratford.ca, 226-921-5472.

### BURGER & FRY NIGHT

Thursday, November 21, 2024; 5:30 - 8 p.m.

Stratford Legion Branch 008, (behind A&W)

Show up for a burger and fries to support the branch. \$10. Reservations not required.

### MISTLETOE MARKET AT ST. JAMES

Saturday, November 30; 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

St. James Anglican Church, 41 Mornington Street, Stratford

All things Christmas! Baking, savouries, home-made crafts, treasures and many more items just in time for Christmas giving. Be sure to visit our Snowflake Cafe and enjoy tasty treats as our Guest.

## STRATFORD TIMES

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.

Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com

## PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

- The Community Calendar is for non-profit organizations to promote their free admission events at no charge. Event listings can include your event name, date, time and location as well as a phone number, email address or website.
- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, you have the following options:
  - Coming Events Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
  - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
  - Display Ad - Sizes begin at a classified business card size for \$35 + hst

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# Riddles

What did the mom corn ask baby corn?  
"Where is pop corn?"

Why did the kid put the mail in the oven?  
Because he wanted to have hotmail

What kind of mail does a superstar vampire get?  
Fang mail

What did Dracula's teacher say when he failed his math test?  
"Can't you count, Dracula?"

What did one math book say to the other?  
"Don't bother me, I have my own problems"

What kind of light did Noah use on the ark?  
Flood lights

What goes up but never goes down?  
Your age

What happens when you throw a green rock in the Red Sea?  
It gets wet

What part of a computer does an astronaut like best?  
The space bar

What did the beach say when the tide came in?  
Long time no sea

# Sudoku

			2	3			1	8
			7				5	9
1		5						
				9		8		3
	8			5				
7				8	4			
		6			9	1		
8	2				3			5
5	1	9		7		4		

Solutions on page 38



## SPIKE

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## Pet of the Month



# Word Search

## ELECTION

U	G	E	R	L	R	I	I	H	I	I	B	E	F	R	D	L	O	Q	F
Y	D	I	D	N	X	A	N	C	D	I	M	T	E	K	Z	K	U	O	X
X	W	N	G	I	A	P	M	A	C	W	A	F	E	V	Y	T	R	F	L
O	U	P	G	D	V	K	J	A	T	M	E	F	Q	W	B	O	M	J	M
X	X	N	S	O	P	E	E	F	Z	R	X	P	M	G	A	S	J	M	A
W	L	C	H	P	M	T	Y	U	E	Z	C	H	A	L	M	N	G	A	E
I	G	E	R	K	O	J	G	N	I	L	D	E	M	O	C	R	A	C	Y
X	Q	M	B	V	U	H	D	D	D	B	T	I	Z	I	X	X	T	R	F
F	D	Z	L	D	C	U	Z	R	O	A	C	B	M	X	A	V	E	R	Z
S	I	L	R	I	M	O	U	A	D	K	I	N	C	U	M	B	E	N	T
O	I	V	B	H	Y	O	N	I	J	E	L	E	C	T	O	R	A	T	E
T	U	O	N	R	U	T	D	S	T	L	B	T	R	E	S	U	L	T	S
X	K	M	J	H	B	N	M	I	T	N	M	W	M	E	Y	D	U	N	I
G	R	H	N	D	A	R	B	N	X	I	R	J	I	N	N	E	C	A	R
V	R	A	K	C	D	A	I	G	T	G	T	R	O	P	J	B	R	R	F
G	P	H	K	B	L	N	T	G	T	W	A	U	Z	W	S	A	D	T	S
H	R	O	Z	L	H	K	Z	D	A	M	J	R	E	Z	A	T	U	V	Z
K	B	T	O	N	F	O	H	V	I	M	R	Q	T	N	E	E	B	R	K
D	X	T	F	P	V	Z	M	R	M	T	E	E	H	B	T	V	U	L	F
R	G	N	I	L	L	O	P	M	Y	W	P	Z	J	Q	E	S	E	X	G

- BALLOT
- VOTE
- CANDIDATE
- CAMPAIGN
- DEMOCRACY
- POLLING
- CONSTITUENTS
- DEBATE
- ELECTORATE
- INCUMBENT
- PRIMARIES
- FUNDRAISING
- REFERENDUM
- TURNOUT
- RESULTS

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Italy
- 2) Three
- 3) Mollusk
- 4) 1945
- 5) Barometer
- 6) Bucket
- 7) Florence Nightingale
- 8) Trafalgar Square
- 9) 1982
- 10) Star

## SUDOKU

6	9	4	2	3	5	7	1	8
2	3	8	7	4	1	5	6	9
1	7	5	9	6	8	3	2	4
4	5	1	6	9	2	8	7	3
9	8	2	3	5	7	6	4	1
7	6	3	1	8	4	2	9	5
3	4	6	5	2	9	1	8	7
8	2	7	4	1	3	9	5	6
5	1	9	8	7	6	4	3	2

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